

LET THERE BE LIGHT

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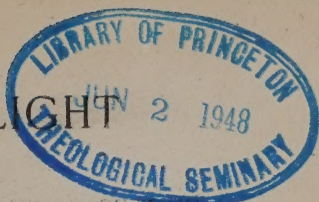
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THE STORY OF A WORKINGMEN'S CLUB, ITS SEARCH
FOR THE CAUSES OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL
INEQUALITY, ITS DISCUSSIONS, AND
ITS PLAN FOR THE AMELIORA-
TION OF EXISTING EVILS

BY

DAVID LUBIN

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M C M

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BY

DAVID LUBIN

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

Eternal Wisdom ! Thee we praise,
Thee the creation sings;
With thy loud name, rocks, hills and seas
And Heaven's high palace rings.

Thy wondrous power and skill array
The earth in cheerful green ;
A thousand herbs thy art display,
A thousand flowers between.

Infinite strength and equal skill
Shine through thy works abroad,
Our souls with vast amazement fill,
And speak the builder God.

Isaac Watts.

Where is the slave so lowly,
Condemn'd to chains unholy,
Who, could he burst
His bonds at first,
Would pine beneath them slowly?

What soul, whose wrongs degrade it,
Would wait till time decay'd it,
When thus its wing
At once may spring
To the throne of Him who made it?

Thomas Moore.

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CHAPTER I

PUBLISH TO ALL THE WORLD

WE were sitting in the library, my wife and I, silent, in the fading light of the October afternoon. Her attitude had not changed during the quarter hour since, returned from our walk, we had dropped into the nearest chairs, meaning to talk on many things. But the crowd of thoughts,—the significance of those influences which might have passed us by, but which instead had, by a mysterious ordaining, seized us, shaken us and reconstructed us,—our hope, our desire, our faith in the future,—all these things could find no adequate expression in such words as came to our minds, and we kept silent.

My wife was leaning forward, gazing at the smouldering embers in the fireplace, her chin resting on her gloved hands. I, with just-lighted cigar held between my fingers, sat watching her, noting unconsciously how her face, and the dark curls escaping from under the velvet of her bonnet, were crossed now and then by

the rays of the western sun, which, entering through the long windows, shot athwart the room.

Footsteps sounded in the hall, and Thomas appeared at the door. "Miss Selner," said he.

Immediately there entered, quickly and quietly, a graceful girlish figure, plainly clothed in black.

My wife rose and held out both hands. "Oh, Eva," she exclaimed, "I am so glad you have come!"

"I could n't help coming, Mrs. Morton. What a surprise, your unexpected journey! As soon as the news reached me I felt that we must all meet together once more before you go. So I hurried to find Mr. Fisher, and he will see the rest of the men, Bradley, Moore, Quail, and Valanti. We can meet at Bradley's house. You will both come, won't you, this evening?"

She looked from one to the other of us as she spoke. "Indeed we will come," replied my wife. "Joseph and I could hardly have the heart to leave, otherwise. Who will be there,—just the five men and ourselves?"

"The five men, of course, but others too, if Mr. Fisher can reach them in time. We have six new members,—think of it! One of them you know already, Schubert, the man you helped so much. Then Mrs. Eldridge, Mr. Winslow, Douglas, a coloured man, brought to us by Quail, the Japanese, Okayama, and Cohen, who used to be a friend of Ezra's. We've known him for a long time."

"You don't know what a shock it was to us, Miss Selner," said I, "to learn of your brother's death. Dorothy was quite prostrated by the news. It seemed hard, just when there was so much for him to do, which perhaps no one else can do as well."

"Ezra is not dead," answered the girl, simply.

"He lives, as all souls live in whom the Lord has reflected His own Spirit. He lives as truly as our own souls will live after they have left their mortal tenements. But for all that, I miss him, oh, so much!"

"And so do we all," remarked Dorothy, "but remember that to him was given to lay the foundation of a mighty work. And to that work my husband and I have resolved to consecrate ourselves, so far as we can be useful to it."

For some moments no one spoke. Then my wife asked :

"Joseph, have you reports of all the meetings?"

"Yes."

"And have you put down in your diary all the incidents that brought us in touch with the club?"

"I think so, up to the time we went to Chicago. I can easily add the rest. Why?"

"Because it all ought to be printed. How else can we reach everybody? There are so few people we know and can talk to, compared with the great world of men and women who might be reached by a book, if the book were only there for them."

"I quite agree. There should be a book, and I wish I could write it, but I can't. I am willing to tell all the experiences that have led me to change my social attitude, and to join in the foundation of the great work. I have never tried to write a book. How would it do to place the matter in the hands of some literary people to put it in current literary form?"

"No, that will never do, Joseph," said my wife; "we want no novel; there are enough of these already. The book should contain the full report of the club meetings. These will be sufficient in themselves to

interest the people. The reports should not be changed, they should be printed just as they were delivered. It will, then, be workingman speaking to workingman, to capitalist,—to all the people.”

“We can bring the matter up,” I said, “at to-night’s meeting.”

“I think,” said Eva, “that this proposal will be very favourably received at the meeting. And now I must go, as I have so many things to do before the meeting. I wish you a most delightful journey. I shall miss you both, and shall think of you often. My prayers go with you.”

“Your prayers will always be a consolation, Eva,” said my wife. “One of them I almost know by heart,—the one I have sometimes heard you say. Repeat it now, with us, won’t you, before you go? It expresses to me, more than any other, the true aspirations of our faith.”

We all drew our chairs nearer, and Eva, clasping her hands in her lap, raised her eyes, and, with a look of exaltation on her features,—features Hebraic in cast, and nobly spiritual,—repeated the prayer, my wife and I uttering the words with her, but in a lower tone :

Praised be Thou, Gracious and Sovereign Lord.
Thou who art the source of all,
Thou who art without beginning and without end ;
Thou who knowest not Injustice,
And withholdest not Mercy.
Thou only Entity !
Thou Archetype of Beauty,
Thou true Spiritual Harmony !
All-Father,

Our Father.

Infinite Love and Loveliness,

God.

To Thee do we humbly and reverently raise our voices in prayer.

We come to Thee for Light, for Spiritual Light,
Which shall illumine our souls.

We come to Thee for guidance, for Thy help to keep us

Steadfast in the course which Thou wouldst have us follow.

Efface from our hearts, O God, any trace of enmity, any cause of dissension.

Blot out from our minds the dividing lines which we, through ignorance, have placed there.

Teach us to remember that White Men, Black Men and Yellow Men, are alike Thy children.

Teach us to know that all these are our brethren and our neighbours.

Teach us how we may learn

To know Thee through Thy works and

Through Thy laws, in order that we may be

Freed from all traces of idolatry.

Grant this, our prayer and our petition,

And, in Thy gracious mercy, grant this to all mankind.

Amen.





CHAPTER II

CAPITAL, AND LABOUR

IT was almost a year ago—eight months, perhaps, before the conversation just narrated—when I first made the experiment of addressing a workingman as one man speaks to another. The occasion was this :

My uncle had walked briskly into the library one morning after breakfast, and said to me :

“ Joseph, I am going to the bank. Won’t you take the waggon, drive to the Lenox Avenue building, and try to fix up the difficulty with the men ? ”

Now everyone who knows my uncle, Mr. Henry Morton, knows that when he requests a thing to be done, that thing is, in his mind, already done, and admits of no discussion. I therefore replied :

“ Yes ; but what is the matter ? ”

“ Oh, they have struck,—quit work. ”

“ Why ? ”

“ I don’t know. I have just got word of it. ”

“ Should I report to you the terms of any settlement before I agree to it ? ”

“ Perhaps ; but only if it involves some considerable loss. ”

“ Very well. ” And I hurried away on my errand.

An hour later my uncle returned. I was already in the library.

"Well, Joseph," he began, "what about the strike?"

"It is all settled. It has been declared off."

"What did it cost us?"

"It cost us nothing, but it may be quite a loss to the ironwork contractor."

"How so?"

"The trouble was that the contractor had placed some orders for iron columns with a non-union foundry. When these were delivered the men went on a strike. They refused to do any work on the building if the non-union ironwork were used. On reading over the contract, I found a stipulation which called for union work from all contractors and sub-contractors. I read this to the iron man, and he spoke to the men, telling them that the non-union iron would not be used, and so the strike was declared off."

"Yes," said my uncle, "I remember the clause. I had it inserted in the contract."

"Why?" I inquired. "Are you so fond of labor unions?"

"Fond? I wish they were at the bottom of the sea. No, I had the clause inserted to guard against such loss and trouble as I had with the Brooklyn buildings, a few years ago."

"But I thought you gained the victory then."

"Yes, I gained the victory, but such victories cost too much money. My capital lay idle for three months during the fight with the union, and when we took on non-union men they botched the job. Besides, the heavy rains that fell before the roofs were in place warped the timbers."

"So it would seem the best policy to contract all building work to be done by union men."

"That is what I invariably do now. It is the best policy, though by no means the best principle."

"Why?"

"Because," replied my uncle, "the union system is vicious and un-American. It is not free competition; it is coercive, oppressive and tyrannical. It brings you and me into contempt. Consider; here are a lot of boors, many of them foreigners, who dictate to us, their employers. The wild talk of unscrupulous politicians does much to encourage these rascals in their defiance of law. They hear that they are nature's noblemen, the right arm of the nation, and more stuff of that sort. The asses actually believe it. No wonder they band together to coerce the very men on whom they are dependent."

"What remedy is there for this state of things?"

"I wish I knew a remedy. All I can think of is counter-combinations among employers, but that is not always practicable or even possible."

"But is n't this trouble decreasing?"

"On the contrary, it is increasing. The impudence of the unions is almost incredible. For example, I had for several years a most obedient and trustworthy man as care-taker in my Eighth Avenue buildings. He was a good carpenter, and I was ready to help him along, so I put him to work on some of my unfinished houses. What was the result? The poor man was constantly insulted, called a 'scab' and other vile names, and threatened with bodily harm. In the end he had to quit the job."

"I am beginning to think that serious results will follow the excess of freedom allowed to this raw and

ignorant body of men. Instead of flaunting the liberty cap before their eyes, we should show them the yoke of law, the strong, restraining arm of centralised power. They clamour of liberty ; but liberty, to them, means licence,—licence to rule, to dictate, to trample on the law. There is but one really effective way to deal with them. We should strengthen and centralise authority, then stimulate this rabble to commit those excesses for which they are only too ready, and crush them once and for ever."

"That reminds me, Uncle Harry," I said, speaking in a lower tone, "that the woodworker you sent for is sitting out in the hall, waiting for his orders. He has probably overheard our conversation, and if he is a union man, as is likely, he must be considerably edified by your comments."

"Oh, well," replied my uncle, "that does n't matter much. These union men all know my opinion anyway. I'll set him to work on the bookcases in the library annex, and when the plumber comes while I am out, will you explain to him about the gas fixtures?"

"Yes, certainly," I replied.

This library annex was a small addition to the house, made necessary by the exigencies of my uncle's business, and recently constructed. A door connected it with the library, of which it was in reality an extension, and in the two rooms was transacted most of the business connected with the care of my uncle's property and my own.

My uncle, having given his instructions to the woodworker, departed. Shortly there arrived the expected plumber, whom I took into the library extension, where I gave him the necessary orders about his work. Then I returned to my desk and my own duties, leaving

both workingmen in the adjoining room, through the half-opened door of which came presently a cheerful noise of pounding and hammering.

Left alone in the library, I worked for some time, absorbed in my correspondence. At length I realised that the noise of hammering had ceased, and, looking at my watch, I perceived that it was after twelve o'clock. From the next room came the sound of voices. The workmen were eating their dinner, and were conversing meantime. The woodworker was speaking; I recognised his deep bass tones.

"It would have made your blood boil to hear the old man. He hates the workingman; he showed it in every word he uttered. He is a good example of his class. I wish the day were here when we could give these swine what they have earned."

Ah, this was interesting! So we were swine, my uncle and I! I would do some listening on my own account; and, leaning back in my chair, I waited for the plumber's reply. It came promptly, though not quite in the form I had anticipated.

"I can understand," he said to the woodworker, "why you feel as you do; but you seem to forget that it is natural for men in their position to think and talk in that way about organised labour. Suppose you somehow got as much money as they have, how would you act? Would you sit here and talk on familiar terms with a plumber? Would you double or triple the rate of wages? Would you spend your time trying to better the condition of the poor? Or would you perhaps divide your money with us workingmen? Of course not. I guess that you, as a rich man, would feel about the poor, and about organised labour, just as these people do."

"That may be," the woodworker answered, "but

it only goes to prove that private ownership, capitalism, is degrading and demoralising. I know you are opposed to collectivism ; but tell me, what will the present system result in ? Do you know what the old man said this morning ? He said that the only effective way to deal with organised labour was to strengthen central authority, goad the workingman to excesses, and then crush him forever. What does that mean ? It means that these swine of capitalists want power to reduce still farther the measure of our bread, to take from our children still more of their opportunities for education by sending them to the factory instead of the school. They even rob us of our right of charity by withholding from us the means of caring for our aged, our feeble, our helpless and our unfortunate.

“ They are willing to do all this and more too, and are not ashamed to employ centralised power in the form of state and national bayonets. And for what ? What but to swell their unrighteous absorption of the earnings of labour that they may wallow the more in the trough of luxury !

“ Cheaper, cheaper ! is their constant cry, but when we purchase we find it is dearer, still dearer ! Only what we have for sale, our toil, our energy, our trades-craft, and our time, — these things, through their cunning and rapacious cruelty, are made cheap. And when they sell to us our food, our clothes, and our shelter, — these, with devilish cunning, are made dear. Thus do the capitalistic ghouls seize us on both sides, and feed fat on human flesh and blood.”

“ You overdraw the picture, I think,” said the plumber. “ You see but one side, the power of capital ; but is there not an effectual force in organised labour which is able to counteract the evils you complain of ?

If capital seeks to crush us by centralising authority, can we not overcome it by our votes? Does not labour, by its votes, and by its organisation, in fact ward off injury? Do we not hold the balance of power, and thus, in a measure, dictate our own terms?

"So far as I can see, our real weakness lies not so much in the power of our antagonists, as in our own lack of efficient organisation. Take the American Federation of Labour, for instance. If this organisation wields the influence it does with only some six hundred thousand members, how much greater would that influence be, were its membership doubled or trebled! And yet there are workingmen enough in the United States to form an organisation of five millions, or even more, if we include agricultural labourers.

"It seems to me we would better work together toward increasing the strength of our organisation, instead of whining about the power of our antagonists.

"And, by the way, what was done at the last club meeting? I meant to be there, but work prevented."

"Well," the woodworker replied, "we decided on a name, 'The Twentieth Century Club.' Ezra was elected president. The subject for the next meeting is 'The Republic and Its Destiny.' You are the first speaker. I am to be censor."

"Isn't the subject rather far-fetched? I thought we were to discuss the industrial problem."

"So did I. But in order to cover the entire field it was decided to begin discussion with government,—this government,—and so to work toward the central theme of our inquiry."

"Do you think it will all end in any practical good?"

"I can't tell yet," answered the woodworker. "I hope so; in some form or other."



CHAPTER III

THE PLUMBER AND THE WOODWORKER

THIS conversation began to interest me unexpectedly. I felt inclined to take part in it, and I walked through into the adjoining room, to the evident surprise of the two men, who, seated near each other, were eating their bread and meat, and drinking their coffee, as they talked.

"Perhaps I should have let you know that I was in the next room," said I, "but my mind was occupied with various ideas which your conversation suggested, and it only occurred to me this moment that you were probably not aware of my presence."

"We thought you were at lunch," replied the plumber, "or we should have been more careful in some of the things we said."

The plumber was a stout man of perhaps forty-five. His eye was clear and his glance penetrating. His face, with its reddish beard and its shaven upper lip, appeared to me characteristically that of the American workingman. In fact he seemed almost a counterpart of that figure which, with paper cap, leather apron, rolled-up sleeves and hammer in hand, is used by our sculptors to typify "Labour."

Taking a seat at the table, I addressed myself first to

the woodworker. The latter was evidently of German birth, as his accent had indicated,—a man of thirty-five or so, of medium height and good build, of light complexion, slightly bald, and wearing a moustache.

“It seems to me,” I began, “that my uncle, Mr. Morton, whom you saw this morning, may be regarded as at one pole of the question under discussion, and you at the other. And both of you, therefore, may be fairly called extremists.”

“Who that is poor, and who that is rich, is not an extremist?” he answered.

My first impression of the woodworker had been that he represented a low order of intelligence, but this impression was modified when he began to speak, for then his face took on that animation, caused by interest in the subject, peculiar to the intellectual German. It was then, in his expression, and in the earnest intensity of his manner, that could be discerned those pugnacious, tenacious qualities which reminded one of a Luther or a Moltke,—a plain simplicity in repose, animation in intellectual exercise.

“I am what you call rich,” I said, “and your friend the plumber is what some call poor, yet neither of us is an extremist.”

“But if I am to be condemned as an extremist,” pursued the woodworker, “so must you condemn your uncle, whom you call an extremist also.”

“I condemn neither. Such natures are as necessary to social development as is the conservative mind; in fact, more so, for we owe much to the radicals. They are the originators, the initiators, the promulgators; and as such they deserve our high esteem. The conservative mind checks undue impetuosity, sifts, weighs, eliminates, and amends. There lies its value.

"Your club meetings," I continued, "are likely to result in good, provided these two qualities of mind are represented in your association; and, judging by you two, I should say they were. But tell me, are your discussions limited to collectivism?"

"We have laid out no programme yet," replied the plumber, "but we don't mean to confine the discussions to socialism. In fact, so far as I know, we have only one member who believes in it."

"I feel interested in your club," said I. "Can you let me see the reports of your debates? I should be glad to read them over."

"We have no way of doing that," the woodworker answered. "The debates are not in writing, and we can't afford a stenographer."

"I would attend some of the meetings myself," I said, "if I were asked."

The plumber looked toward his companion. "We will propose your invitation at the next meeting," said he. The woodworker nodded assent.

"Thank you. Let me hear from you. And now, in case I am invited to some meeting which I am unable to attend, I have another proposition to make. Suppose I send my stenographer to take down the debates. I will have him report them as fully as you desire, and then put his report into typewriting, one copy for each member, if you are not too many, and one for me. How will that do?"

"Very well, indeed," replied the plumber, with a pleased, eager look. "That will give us a chance to compare the arguments and analyse them."

"Well, then," said I, "I will send the stenographer."

The woodworker had seemed to reflect for a moment.

"Perhaps we ought to place your offer before the club, and have it acted on in the regular way," he said.

"Quite so," I replied. "Make the offer in my name. And now, before I go, I will present myself. My name is Morton, Joseph Morton, and I live here with my uncle, Mr. Henry Morton. Call on me here at any time. I shall be glad to see you."

"My name," said the plumber, "is James Bradley."

"And mine is Frederick Fisher," added the wood-worker.

"I am happy to know you, gentlemen. And your club,—how many members has it?"

"Six," the plumber answered.

"All workingmen?"

"Yes, like Fisher and myself."

"Then I shall expect to meet you all soon." And, turning, I left the men to their work, and re-entered the library.

No sooner was I alone than doubts entered my mind as to the wisdom of my course. Clearly, the proposition I had made, if it led to anything, would result in other relations with workingmen than those to which I had been accustomed. In fact, those new relations had already begun. I could no longer speak quite as before to the two men whom I had invited to meet me, in certain ways, on an equality. What would be the result, to me, of such a constantly increasing change in my social attitude?

Of my uncle's feelings I had no doubt. He had sufficiently expressed them; and he would hardly sympathise with my friendship for men who called him "swine" and "ghoul." To be sure, he had called them "rascals" and "asses," but that would hardly seem to him sufficient reason for shaking hands with

them. I could count on his strong disapproval of my course.

And what was my own real motive? Was I to hear the case between capital and labour, and perhaps render a voluntary judgment against myself? Did I desire to take up practical philanthropy? Was I anxious for popularity? Had I not acted thoughtlessly and on the spur of the moment? Suppose I actually followed a course that indicated sympathy with the working classes and perhaps with socialism, and suppose that fact became known among my friends and in my club; would anyone attribute to me my real motive? They would all either think me crazy, or would credit me with laying wires for an entry into politics. The inconsistency of my various attitudes could not fail to strike me. Which of them were false? Let me consider.

First, as to my club and my friends. What was the club to me, or I to it? To me it was a lounging place, a place to kill time. To the club I was a member, a unit, and that was all. What special good was society to me? Why should I encase myself in conventionalities for its sake; why wrap myself in social bandages?

Did I need the aid of society in order to accumulate money? Had I not all the wealth my ambition craved? What if, through me, some practical good could be achieved for the working classes; what if I could aid in lessening the continuous strife between capital and labour? Was not this a grander, nobler cause than merely following the rut of convention?

"Yes, a thousand times," came the answer. And this conclusion of the reason,—how closely it linked itself and became of a kind with the spontaneous impulse which had prompted my offer to the men! Should I retreat? Never.

Out through the door of the library extension came the plumber and the woodworker.

"We have finished our job," announced the former, "so we will say good-afternoon."

"Good-afternoon," repeated the woodworker.

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen," said I, advancing, and shaking hands with each of them. "I shall expect to see you again." And in a moment the street door closed on them.

"What 's this? What 's this?" exclaimed my uncle, who had entered during the leave-taking, and stood with amazement depicted on his face.

"What?"

"Oh, this smirking and hand-shaking. How much did you give them?"

"I did n't pay them."

"Did n't you slip a quarter or half-dollar into their hands?"

"No, I gave them no money."

"Did you give them some beer?"

"No."

"Well, what 's all this smirking and hand-shaking about?"

There was nothing for it but to tell my uncle the truth, and I did so, relating in a few words what had taken place. He listened intently. When I had concluded he had raised his hand, and, bringing it down on my desk with a thump that set all the papers dancing, exclaimed:

"Joseph Morton, do you know what I think of you?"

"I suppose you think I 'm a fool."

"Exactly."

"Well, I 'm not surprised. I thought so myself a

few minutes before you came in, but I've got over that now."

"Ah, I see," said my uncle, smiling. "So this is the way you start into politics! But why take all this trouble when you are in a position to reach the Boss direct?"

"I assure you, Uncle Harry, I have no such intention."

"What then? Have you turned philanthropist? And are you turning socialist too?"

"I am no more a socialist than you are," I replied. "But here was a chance for some personal observation on the labour problem. Besides, I was glad to be able to assist these workingmen."

"Workingmen? Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed my uncle. "What have you or I, or any decent man, in common with this rabble? Why listen to idle talk on lockouts, knockouts, strikes, eight-hour laws, scabs, rats, slave-drivers, collectivism and government ownership, the initiative and the referendum, all spiced and salted down with single tax and anarchy? Have we any special interest in those twins in knavery, the walking delegate and the labour leader? Come, Joseph, have some sense and keep out of this! You have nothing to gain and much to lose by such foolish intermeddling."

"What have I to lose? May I not, on the other hand, learn to be of use to my fellow-man?"

"You have tapped a hornet's nest," my uncle replied, "and I fear you will regret it. The trouble is, you have had too easy a time all your life. Your father never talked as you do now. He and I were the pioneers of our fortunes; we started poor and worked our way up. His ambition was to give you such a

position in the world as few attain. You have that position ; why jeopardise it by mixing with socialists and labour agitators ? Let your purpose once be known, and you will be shunned as a crank throughout society, if you 're not even forced out of your club."

" I have considered all this, Uncle," said I, " and my conclusion is reached."

" What is it ? "

" This : I value my money, I value my friends ; but I value most my personal liberty, and I shall adhere to my plan."

" But what will Dorothy say ? "

" I don't know."

" Perhaps you don't care."

" I do care. I care very much."

My uncle drew up the roll top of his desk with a bang, seated himself violently, and plunged into the consideration of his papers.





CHAPTER IV

TREASON AGAINST SOCIETY

IT may be well, at this point, to give the reader a few words of information about some of the persons who figure in this narrative. And, first, my uncle and myself :

My uncle, Henry Morton, came, with my father, from Bangor, Maine, in the early sixties. Settling in New York City, they began their business careers in a very humble way, and, by industry and economy, succeeded in accumulating what was then to them a considerable amount of money. This they used as capital, and, after a series of fortunate ventures, they withdrew from active business, investing largely in real estate in this city and in Brooklyn. My mother died when I was five years of age, and my father's death, which occurred soon after I had reached my twenty-fourth year, five years ago, left me an orphan and his sole heir. So, closing the house, for which there remained no other occupant than myself, I moved my belongings to the home of my uncle, where I have since given such assistance as I was competent to render in the care of both estates.

In personal appearance my uncle is thought to

resemble somewhat Abraham Lincoln. Tall, angular, wiry, with strongly marked features, carrying easily his fifty-three years, he is accustomed to command attention and respect. Though usually courteous and affable, and, when in that mood, sometimes liberal to a fault, a slight annoyance may have disproportionate results, and make him irritable and captious. He is a great reader and a good debater; of strict business habits, he insists on the fulfilment of all obligations to which he is a party.

His wife, my "Aunt Barbara," as I am accustomed to call her, is a refined, sympathetic, sensible woman of forty-eight, among whose many amiable qualities one of the most conspicuous is her devoted attachment to her husband.

The remaining member of our household was a relative of Mrs. Morton's, Miss Dorothy Hamilton, then twenty-two years of age, and since become, as the reader may have guessed, my wife. Left an orphan at an early age, she received an excellent education, which she supplemented by much and varied reading, of a high order. She is slightly below the medium height, slender but not angular, with large dark eyes, and dark brown waving hair. Of her mental characteristics the reader may be able to form some idea during the course of this narrative. She, as well as my uncle and my aunt, had been brought up in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which they were members; while I had laid myself open to the reproach of belonging to no church, but of going to whatever form of religious service my inclination prompted.

My morning's mail of the Saturday next after my conversation with the workmen included the following letter:

"TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB,

"NEW YORK, January 10, 1899.

"MR. JOSEPH MORTON—

"*Dear Sir:* Your valuable offer to furnish this club with stenographic reports of its debates has been acted upon and accepted.

"We cordially invite you to attend the meetings of the club, which are to be held on the third Wednesday of every month, beginning the 18th instant. Debates at 7.45 P.M.

"Thanking you for your kindness, we are,

"Yours very truly,

"THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB,

"ANTONIO VALANTI, Sec'y."

By way of announcing my receipt of this invitation, I handed it to Dorothy at breakfast. And hardly had I escaped from the dining-room and seated myself at my desk, when she, followed by my uncle and my aunt, gravely entered the library and approached me.

"Prisoner at the bar," said she, "you are accused of a serious offence,—treason against society. It is alleged that you harbour an intention to be present at socialistic meetings, and, further, that you plan to materialise the abominable doctrines which may be there promulgated, by having the same reported by your stenographer. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," I replied.

"There, Uncle!" exclaimed Dorothy. "You see he has been falsely accused. I discharge the prisoner and dismiss the case."

"I thought so," said my uncle, shaking his head.

"I thought Dorothy would bring you to your senses. But perhaps you had given up the idea already."

"I have not given up the idea. On the contrary, I am about to instruct my stenographer to attend the meetings and report them."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed my uncle.

"I mean that this is no club of socialists. The discussions, I am told, are to be on the relations between capital and labour."

"But if you want information on that question why seek it from agitators like these? Why not read the books in this library, or go to a course of lectures?"

"Let me ask a question or two of Dorothy," said I, "and we will see which is the better way. Dorothy, you think the labour question is a proper one to investigate, don't you?"

"Yes."

"And which do you think the better source of information, professors and their books, or intelligent workingmen?"

"Workingmen, I should say."

"Why?"

"Because they speak from experience."

"Yes, that is one reason; but there is another. College or university professors sometimes lean toward the side of capital; and if they do not, the regents or trustees do."

"What!" exclaimed my uncle. "Are you starting out as a champion of labour?"

"Oh, would n't that be splendid!" cried Dorothy, clapping her hands. "I should so love to have you!"

"Have you deserted me too, Dorothy?" my uncle asked, in despair. "Well, the next time I want help I shall take care not to ask it from——"

"A woman," Dorothy added, laughing. "Yes, you are right, Uncle. We do change our minds."

"The intuitive judgment of a woman is often more trustworthy than our slow reasoning process, Uncle

Harry," I said. "I trust Dorothy to be on the right side."

"So the die is cast," said my uncle, with apparent resignation. "But you fail to see, much less to realise, what lies in your path. Your new experiences will fill your head with strange and impracticable whims,—perhaps involve you in questionable schemes. They will certainly undermine your religious faith."

"Henry," said my aunt, softly, "why not try the experiment of a single meeting? If that has any such results as you fear, it will end the whole matter."

"Yes, let Joseph go to the first meeting," Dorothy concluded. "Then it will be so much easier for him to decide what to do."

My uncle made no further comment, and, to my great relief, this question was settled.





CHAPTER V

THE REPUBLIC AND ITS DESTINY

ON the appointed evening I proceeded, with my stenographer, to the rooms—or room—of the Twentieth Century Club, on Second Avenue. The street number which I sought proved to be at the entrance to a tenement-like building of respectable appearance. I ascended the narrow staircase, and at the head of the first flight of steps found a door upon which appeared a small, lettered sign, bearing the club's name. At my knock the door was opened by Bradley, the plumber, who greeted me cordially, and invited me in.

I found myself in a room about fifteen by twenty feet in extent, the floor bare, and the walls and ceiling covered with a cheap paper. In the centre stood a table, upon which rested a lamp and some books. Green shades were drawn at the two windows which looked upon the street. In a corner were some shelves bearing more books. Upon opposite walls hung a map of the world, a cheap picture of Washington, and some framed documents. A settee and plain chairs completed the meagre furnishings.

Bradley, who now wore a suit of black instead of his

ordinary working clothes, presented to me the remaining members of the club, of whom the first to greet me was an Italian, Antonio Valanti.

Mr. Valanti was a man of twenty-five or six, slightly below the average in height, with the dark complexion of his race, curling hair and drooping moustache. His expression denoted geniality and frank simplicity.

Two men who, seated on the settee, had seemed engrossed in discussion, now rose and came toward me. One of them was my friend the woodworker, Mr. Frederick Fisher, who shook my hand and made way for his companion, Mr. Daniel Moore. Moore was apparently an Irish-American, or possibly even a native Irishman. He seemed forty years of age, was of average height, thin, wiry and nervous, and of light complexion, with sandy hair and short side whiskers.

At this point the door opened to admit the two remaining members. The first was a negro, probably the youngest man in the group, certainly not twenty-five years of age. He was tall, with shining black skin and good features. He bore himself well, his dress was careful, and his manner was easy and polite as he came up and smilingly gave me his hand. He was presented to me as Mr. Thomas Quail.

Although these five members of the club undoubtedly possessed more intelligence than is usually found among even the higher type of mechanics, yet they would not have been specially noticed as different from others of their class. The sixth member, however, who was now presented to me, bore the impress of a personality which compelled a second glance. He was a young man, hardly over thirty, of medium stature, with smoothly shaven face and dark complexion. His features wore an expression of noble seriousness. It

needed no second glance to perceive that, by descent at least, he was a Jew. In him I met the club's president, Ezra Selner.

Chairs were now placed for me and for the stenographer near the head of the table. All present seated themselves; and Mr. Selner, who was familiarly addressed as Ezra, rose, and made the formal announcement, "Gentlemen, The Twentieth Century Club will now come to order. The secretary will read the report of the last meeting."

Report of a meeting of the Twentieth Century Club, New York, January 18, 1899, 7.45 P.M.

After the reading of the minutes Ezra arose and spoke as follows:

Ezra.—Gentlemen, I do not deem it proper to take up the time of the association in any extended preliminary remarks. You all know the object and purpose for which we are organised. You may remember that one of the objects was mutual and self-improvement; the other the development of some plan for ameliorating the conditions under which we live. We all agree that these are worthy subjects for our earnest consideration, and for this reason are we organised.

At the preliminary meeting it was proposed that we take up the industrial question; but an amendment prevailed that we begin our inquiry by a debate on government,—the government of this Republic. In accordance with the resolution, I announce that the subject for this evening will be, "The Republic and Its Destiny." Mr. Fisher has been appointed censor for the evening, and Mr. Bradley will be the first speaker.

The plumber arose and spoke in an unembarrassed manner, as though he were used to making public addresses. In fact all the members of the club were

evidently accustomed to public speaking, and to that I attributed the facility in the use of grammatical and even at times elegant language with which I had been impressed in listening to their talk.

Mr. Bradley.—Mr. President and Gentlemen : We may not know for a certainty what the ultimate outcome of this Republic is to be, for many attempts at a democratic form of government have been made in the past ; and we have seen even the best of these efforts submerged in a flood of despotism.

If statistics are taken for our guide, and if we consider the number of the earth's inhabitants, from earliest historic times to the present day, we shall find that very few lived under a free or representative government. Even now, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there is but a small percentage of the world's population under free government. Yet free government was well known in ancient days, as we may observe from the writings of Aristotle and other Greek and Roman authors. However, this much we can say with some degree of certainty :—that never before in the history of the world has there been a more favourable time than now for the higher development of liberal forms of government. For this government and its higher trend we are indebted to the great men to whom this land has given birth. To these men we owe the blessings we enjoy. What other country can show men like Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Franklin, Clay, Webster, Lincoln ? With such men to give the trend, we may confidently hope to be led ever upward and onward in our glorious path.

We are an example making manifest to all the world the benefits to be derived from a government by the people, of the people and for the people. We see

clearly that in the past free government failed because the people were unfaithful to their ideal. If we but avoid this defect, we may confidently hope that ultimately this form of government, thus demonstrated by us to be the best, will be adopted throughout the world. This, I believe, is the destiny of this Republic.

Do not infer that I believe our government has already attained its highest development. On the contrary, I deem it still in the experimental stage ; it has yet to be weighed in the balance. We feel yet the momentum of the ideas of the pioneer founders of this Republic. Their ideas we have materialised. And, as we invariably find the ideal higher than its materialisation, we need not be surprised to find that in practical application our government is not fully up to that standard conceived by the founders of our country.

Herein, in my opinion, lies the main cause for our present inquiry, for it seems to me that we could not complain of inequality and injustice, were there a strict adherence to the theme and principles of our government as it was originally promulgated.

The desire for amelioration springs largely from the wish to make perfect what is now imperfect. As we know that we have reason for demanding the amelioration of our condition, so may we know that the cause of the evils of which we complain is centred in the imperfections of our government, in the defects of its practical application.

Is this not evident ? Is it not evident in our present mode of exercising the rights of the franchise ? Voting can be done by any citizen, properly registered. This is true :—but for whom do the voters vote ? Some, no doubt, answer, “ For the candidates of their choice.” But how much truth is there in that ? No truth at all,

it seems to me. In reality, almost all vote for candidates selected for them by an irresponsible and interested minority. Investigation will show clearly that this interested and irresponsible minority represents, on the one hand, the retail liquor-dealers, and on the other, the great trusts and corporations. This interested and irresponsible minority acts as a unit, through the medium of the caucus and the primary. And so long as such is the case, the real governing power of the people must be largely frustrated. Under such a system, there is every danger that government will cease to be representative, and will become oligarchic.

Improvements have, indeed, been made, and are being made, in the system of casting the vote ; but of what use are such changes so long as retail liquor-dealers and trusts and corporations control the caucus and the primary ? Of no use whatever.

It therefore seems to me that the cause of the injustice and inequality under which we labour may be traced to an imperfection in our government, and that the removal of this imperfection would bring the amelioration which we seek.

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Moore.

Mr. Moore.—Mr. President and Gentlemen : It seems to me we are indebted not solely to the illustrious men mentioned by the speaker who preceded me, but to many others. Some legacy we have received from the classic Greeks ; in modern times we have felt the influence of the Hansa Towns ; and to Holland, England, Switzerland and France, we owe a large measure of the liberty we enjoy.

I agree with the last speaker, however, as to the destiny of this Republic. I agree with him as to the imperfections of our system of nominating delegates for

primaries and conventions ; I admit that such imperfections exist. I think with him that these imperfections are largely the cause of the existing inequality and injustice from which we suffer. I agree, too, that the removal of this cause would bring the amelioration which we seek. The question remains, how may this evil be remedied ? And the only answer I can give is this :—that citizens should be compelled to attend the caucus and the primary. This, if done, would take the nominating power away from the irresponsible few, and place it in the hands of the people. Such penalties could then be imposed as would render attendance at caucus and primaries as certain as is attendance for jury duty.

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Valanti.

Mr. Valanti.—Mr. President and Gentlemen : It would be in poor taste for an American citizen to claim any superlative merit for a foreign government under which he, or his fathers, once lived ; not simply because the government of the United States is that under which he lives now, but because its real merits deserve his entire and unbiassed devotion.

Where else in all the world shall we find that real equality, that real fraternity, that real liberty, which we enjoy here ? This very assembly, for instance, this harmonious debate among persons of various races, creeds, and colour,—where else but in this country would it be possible ? Yet we should not lack the courage to speak the truth frankly, as we find it in the facts of history. Does not this Republic owe its form, and I may say its very possibility of existence, to the old Roman Republic ? Is this fact not manifest in our national standard of the eagle, in the bundle of tied rods formerly carried by the lictors, in our adoption

of the principles of Roman civil and political law, and of Rome's parliamentary usage?

Did not Rome, from the time of Romulus to that of Augustus, teach the world more about a republican form of government than did any other nation whatever? Did not the Roman Republic give the trend to, and in reality shape the destiny of, all other republics that have since been, or are yet to be?

That there has since been improvement, development, is true; but this fact in no wise removes the debt of obligation which we owe to that magnificent force in human affairs, the Roman Republic. We are, therefore, justified in concluding that the government under which we live is in reality but a continuation, in essential spirit and form, of that evolved by the ancient Romans. And as improvement and development have followed their initial efforts, so further improvements and higher developments are likely to follow our present endeavours, and in time our form of government will become the general and only one. The development of the republican form of government is, therefore, the destiny of this Republic.

I have listened with interest to the suggestions of the preceding speakers for the amelioration of our present condition. While I am of the opinion that not all existing injustice and inequality are due to the causes which they name, I agree that the imperfections of our franchise system are a sore-spot in our body-politic.

But I think the remedy suggested by the last speaker would not be acceptable to the American people. Any act compelling voters to attend the caucus, or to vote at a primary, would be considered tyranny, and would not be likely of adoption.

As a substitute for the caucus, I propose a system of choosing delegates for primaries, conducted by open ballot, through the United States mail. Let each voter use a blank attested by two citizen witnesses, fill it in and mail it to the place directed. Thus every citizen would have the right to name, as delegate, whomsoever he pleased within the meaning and intent of the law. Penalties for forgery or for non-compliance could be embodied in the act ; and, so as to remove the expense from the poor, it could be provided that these blanks be franked, and go free as first-class mail.

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Quail.

Mr. Quail.—Mr. President and Gentlemen : Were I inclined to shelter my people from reproach for any present shortcomings, by recalling some compensating glory of the past, I could point to no such glory. The negro race can as yet boast of no exalted achievement in the world's development, nor can I, in their behalf, proudly recall the past, in the manner of the last speaker. For the negro, his glory, if any, must be of the future. Our labour for humanity is before us, yet to be accomplished. Therefore whatever I may say of the share of other peoples in shaping this Republic, and in giving it its peculiar trend, may be accepted as free from bias or preconceived notions.

And now, as to the trend of this Republic : can we not unerringly show it to have been given by the Hebrew people, the Jews ? When all the world was governed by force, by the rule of might, was not the Hebrew Commonwealth governed by the law of equity, by the Bible ? Was not the Bible this people's constitution and their code ? Was not this unalterable constitution and code their unerring guide for centuries, in government and in social life ?

As for this Republic, was it established from a desire to copy the government of ancient Rome or that of the Hanseatic Towns? Was it with this intention that the Pilgrim Fathers came to these shores? Was this the cause of their self-imposed exile from home and fatherland? Was the cause not, rather, their determination to interpret freely, and to embody in social and political life, those very laws of the Jews, as set forth in the Bible? Cannot this same motive, in a modified form, be attributed to the Catholics who originally settled in Maryland? And the Quakers in Pennsylvania, and the other sectarians who formed settlements in the New World,—were they not all actuated by a similar impulse? And did not all this result in the establishment of this Republic?

They tell us the Republic was born when the Declaration of Independence was adopted; but was it not, rather, born when the Pilgrim Fathers put aside the aristocratic laws of England, and in their stead adopted the republican form of government as set forth in the Bible? Surely. And the influence of the Bible was more potent in the formation of this Republic than were all other influences whatever; for many, and in fact the principal, laws of the early New England settlers were the laws of the Bible pure and simple.

The Republic, therefore, existed long before the tea was thrown overboard in Boston Harbour; long before the battles of Bunker Hill, Lexington, Concord and Saratoga.

In my opinion, the American Nation is the successor of the Hebrew Commonwealth, and the rejection of the Jews has thus been no loss to the world. The spirit of the eternal Constitution,—that divine code by which

the Jews were formerly governed,—is at the very foundation of our social and political constitutions.

I fully agree with the first speaker, who said that never before had there been a more favourable time for the promulgation and perpetuation of liberal forms of government than now. Judea contained a people few in number, and was surrounded on every side by despotism and slavery. The United States, on the other hand, is a mighty nation of nearly eighty millions of the most intelligent and progressive people in the world ; nor are we surrounded by the barbarous conditions which surrounded Israel.

As to the destiny of this Republic, there can be no question. It need but persevere in its course. It will thus not only achieve for itself the highest place in the history of nations ; it will, through its influence, raise the standard of all the other nations of the earth. This is its destiny. This it is which should make any man feel proud who, bearing the honoured title of American citizen, understands how to appreciate that title.

And now, in conclusion, I desire to comment briefly on the franchise.

It is a fact beyond question that the existing injustice and inequality are largely due to the abuse of the franchise. And from this abuse the negro race suffers most ;—why, and in what part of this country its suffering is most intense, are too well understood to need explanation.

Whether the remedies for this abuse suggested by the speakers who preceded me are of a kind that would be acceptable to the American people I cannot say, but I am sure some efficient remedy would be welcome. The American people as a whole have at stake greater and

more far-reaching interests in the integrity of the franchise than in any other question. Some practical suggestion would therefore be likely of adoption, and I add this one :—that the place for holding caucus and primaries, and for all voting, be the public school buildings.

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Fisher, the censor of the evening.

Mr. Fisher.—Mr. President and Gentlemen : The office of censor is a most difficult and exacting one. It should be the province of the censor, as I understand it, to analyse all seeming truths, and to show wherein, if at all, they are errors. Politeness and courtesy must not interfere with his plain duty. His is the surgeon's art, not that of the soothing midwife. Bringing forth nothing, nor aiding to bring forth, he must pitilessly cut away whatever is foreign to the healthy body. He must be no respecter of persons. Falsehood he must hunt to earth, with the scent of the hound ; the truth he may pass by with silent assent. His main concern is to strike down whatever, in the guise of truth, is, in his opinion, falsehood.

Ordinarily I should not like this office, for it is at best an ungracious one ; but to-night I am glad, very glad, to hold it, and I hope no one here will take what I say as an offence, or as a personal matter. And now to the subject.

I am not surprised at the way in which the members of this association have spoken. They but follow the path in which millions of others have trod, not only in this country, but in every country under the sun and from the beginning of time. But who were those others ? Who but slaves ?

The last speaker, our honoured member, is a negro,

a black man. He will, no doubt, tell you that he is free ; that Lincoln forever burst asunder the shackles of slavery, and so converted slaves from chattels into free men. But is he free for all that ? Can he go to a theatre, to a hotel, to a restaurant, to a fraternal or social society, or even to a white man's church ? Heaven forbid ! He is a negro ! He is a black man and must know his place. What is that place ? Is it one of liberty ? Of fraternity ? In the name of truth, tell me, is his not a condition of slavery ? Need we go farther : need we recall the harassing restrictions, the perversions of law, the barbarous cruelties committed against the people of his race and colour in certain sections of the United States ? Are they not well known to you ? And if these things operate against this people because they are black, or because, as he says, " the negro can as yet boast of no exalted achievement in the world's development," then let me ask you, is there not a trace of this same injustice, this same ostracism, practised in some degree against another people, the Jewish people ? Surely they, above all others, can boast of exalted achievement in the world's development ; and you cannot, even if you try, obscure it. Mark you, the people who call the Jews a parasite people are in error ;—are, in fact, themselves the parasites. For, as you know, it was this Hebrew people which bore the fruit that served not only for themselves, but for the world of Christians and Mohammedans ; by both and all of whom it was greedily absorbed. And is not this achievement enough ?

Yet is the Jew at times only tolerated ; and can you construe his position as liberty, as fraternity, or as equality ? O Truth, how many and manifest are the falsehoods uttered in thy name !

And now, descendant of the sons of Italy, how is it with you in this land of equality, in this haven of fraternity? Is not your name a by-word among us? Are we not wont to call you "Dago?" And does that imply equality, does it imply fraternity? Yet, as you yourself stated it, "Did not Rome, from the time of Romulus to that of Augustus, teach the world more about a republican form of government than did any other nation whatever?" Is not that achievement enough? But the descendants of these very Romans are, in this land of liberty and equality, what? Only "Dagos," fit for ridicule, for sport and for ostracism!

But all these things are trifles light as air compared to the ostracism, the inequality and the slavery suffered by all of us here, and by the millions surrounding us. These manifold millions must hire themselves out in order to obtain the meagre measure of sustenance needed to keep them alive.

Shall I tell you how far we are from being free? Do you not know? Are there any with minds so dulled, so degraded, that they cannot feel the sharp sting of the slave-driver's lash? Slaves who can endure the cutting frown, the cruel word and the cunning snare of the labour-monger, and yet prate of liberty, equality and fraternity, are as base as were the slaves in Judea, who, in the year of Jubilee, refused to go forth free when bidden. Like them, the modern slave should have his ear pierced by an awl to the door-post, and thus be declared slave forever.

What then can we say of the destiny of a government under which these things take place? Shall we say that it should be perpetuated? I for one cannot. We must seek something higher, nobler, grander and freer. Then may we have something to perpetuate.

Ezra.—It is now in order for me to review what has been said ; and as the hour is late, I must be brief.

The composition of this Republic, and the significance of the factors which have entered into it, may perhaps be better understood by a parable.

In a certain community, a number of men agreed to have a festive gathering. Each who came was to bring with him some essential for the feast. At the appointed time they came, and it happily occurred that whatever each brought served to good purpose not only for his own needs, but for the needs of the others. And so the festivity was an occasion of much pleasure. But toward the close, one who believed he had been slighted in not having been honoured by a toast arose, and, complaining bitterly, said, " Did I not bring the bread ? What kind of a festival would this have been without me and my bread ? " And another, who also felt slighted, said, " Bread ye have every day in abundance, but lo, I brought cake and ices, and what honour was shown me ? " And a third arose, saying, " Bread and pastry and ices are good enough, no doubt ; but what kind of festivity would there have been without my chickens, and without my roast meats ? "

Then arose another and said, " Bread, meat and pastry are very good ; but these without wine can make no banquet, and did I not bring the wine ? "

Then said another, " What are these things at a banquet if there be no music ; and behold, did I not furnish the music ? " And others yet arose and made clamour, and the entire company seemed on the point of ending the festival by fighting.

At this time there arose one who had as yet said nothing ; and he rebuked them all, saying, " Brethren, why quarrel ye one with another, and why this

contention ? Can quarrelling do aught except diminish pleasure ? Behold now and hearken unto me, and I will tell you of a way which will lead to peace and to increase of pleasure. Let each one here speak to his neighbour saying, 'I thank thee for that which thou hast brought, and of which I have joyfully partaken.' " And this saying found favour among the assembly ; and they said, each unto his neighbour, the saying which they had heard ; and behold, there were again enjoyment and peace.

We see embodied in this nation, not only the best ideas of all nations, but the very peoples from whom these ideas came. As in an intricate and beautifully woven piece of tapestry, strands of diverse shades are scattered here and there, all with the end of producing harmony of design as a whole ; thus, it seems to me, has the All-Artist, the Master Designer, woven this nation, with warp of ideas from all races, and with woof of peoples of all nations. We have embodied both,—the ideas and the peoples ; and, as in the parable related, we should say, each to the other, "I thank thee for that which thou hast brought, and of which I have joyfully partaken."

First, we should not forget our indebtedness to the Germanic spirit and to the Germanic people. This spirit and this people, in their various blendings with other races and ideas,—and I include the Anglo-Saxon,—are of primary importance as a factor.

It was the Germanic race more than any other which filtered pessimism out of philosophy, which eliminated idolatry from art, which drew the thorns of bigotry and intolerance from religion. Nor is this all ; for its hereditary and zealous love of individual liberty is the most potent of all factors in the foundation of our

American institutions. It is this force, this factor, which has caused this nation to stand for civil, political and religious liberty.

And next comes the powerful influence of the French people, who, if they had produced nothing more than the spirit of liberty embodied in the *Marseilles Hymn*, would, for that reason alone, be entitled to an exalted place in the hearts of all true lovers of liberty.

So we can begin from the beginning, and, bringing each race, each nation, each people, in review, we find that whatever was good, whatever was exalted and whatever profitable, has been sifted, adjusted, adapted and then adopted by us, with the result that this is the most nearly perfect among nations of the past and present.

Shall we therefore say that it has reached its highest development? By no means. We cannot deny that there is a large element of truth in the statement of the censor of the evening. But we need not hesitate to assert that, with all its defects, this is the best government in the world to meet the requirements of an independent and free people. Being such, it is the most progressive, and, being the most progressive, it is destined to be teacher, guide, and director of all the nations of the earth.

That it is this even now, is true, even if not evident at the first glance, as one example will suffice to show. The countless letters, many of them with remittances, sent by the toiling masses of this country to the millions of poor and oppressed people throughout the world constitute suggestive object lessons on free institutions and free government. Such letters must be a powerful educator of vast bodies of people, an effective method of inculcating, in the minds of the recipients, a greater

respect for our flag than for the flag of their own fatherland. And it may perhaps be this very influence which prevents a combined stand of monarchic countries against us.

If we have, therefore, as we believe, a greater measure of justice and equity among us, we must in the end win this, the world's most glorious race. Such is our destiny.

Let me now offer a suggestion to our honoured member, Mr. Quail. In his presentation he said, "The negro race can as yet boast of no exalted achievement in the world's development," and further, "For the negro, his glory, if any, must be of the future. Our labour for humanity is before us: yet to be accomplished." Now I like the spirit in which that was said. It is optimistic, and optimism needs but a purpose to become enthusiastic zeal.

If I may be permitted a remark outside the topic of discussion, I would suggest to Mr. Quail that he interest his people, and begin organised effort to establish at Washington, the Capitol of the Union, a great National Academy of Music for the negro people. This would be a practical beginning in the domain of highest achievement, for nowhere can be found better raw material than the negro for this department of the useful and of the beautiful in art.

We all know that the negro can sing, that he has a voice of good quality and register, and a correct ear, and that his music is melodious and sweet. His melodies, moreover, show characteristics derived from ancestry prior to contact with the western nations; and these characteristic melodies, when developed and brought into relation with what we have, may constitute a new charm for lovers of this art. And if the

negro has a story to tell, if his heart desires communion with the hearts of other men, what better, easier vehicle than the universal language of music ?

Thus given an opportunity, the negro may begin to develop and to achieve, perchance to create, and add his share to the common stock of mankind's exalted blessings. He may then produce masters whose busts will find a niche in the temple of fame, or in the homes of lovers of art. Thus may the people, all the people, singing the song of the negro classic, the creation of the negro master of music, forget their antagonism against this race. And instead, may there be generated that spirit of amity toward the negro in full accord with the progressive trend of the twentieth century, with the spirit and inclination of the American people. We may safely predict that if the negro people but make an earnest effort in this direction, they can count on the sympathy and assistance of thousands of their fellow-citizens in this country, of different races, creeds, colours and conditions.

In concluding, I think it proper to make some observations on the subject of boss-rule. It is true that the subject does not receive the attention its importance demands ; but true only because the mass of the people do not seem to understand what boss-rule really means.

The people understand the meaning of "deserter" and "traitor." These words mean enemies of the Republic, for whom the law provides punishment. But for the boss-rule manipulators there is no punishment ; on the contrary, they are generally regarded with distinguished consideration. Yet a deserter or a traitor can do this Republic far less injury than is done by a boss. Boss-rule is but another name for rule contrary to intent. It is the same, in fact, as rule by coercion,

tacitly assented to by those ruled. And coercive rule, tacitly assented to, is dangerously near to despotism or slavery.

Do the people realise this? Seemingly not ; if we are to judge from the feebleness of the efforts made to remedy this evil.

There are, of course, some isolated and spasmodic efforts from time to time directed against bosses, though these, in the main, are but the work of opposition bosses. But the decline of a boss or a set of bosses is one thing, and the abolition of boss-rule is another.

In addition to the sombre dramatic picture of national subjugation and national degradation which this situation presents, it has likewise its ludicrous aspect. A market man who should neglect to guard against depredations by dogs, cats or rats, and then should scold the dogs, cats and rats for stealing his unguarded provisions, would be deemed a fool. Yet it is not any wiser to permit the theft of rule, and to end it all by scolding the thieves, and permitting them to continue stealing more rule.

Clearly, boss-rule is possible only so long as the people permit a few manipulators to perform the political duties which should be attended to by all the people. And when political duties are mentioned, the majority of persons are inclined to narrow the meaning of the phrase to the function of casting the ballot. This function is, in fact, but of secondary importance, and is subordinate to the selection of the delegate in a manner to correspond with the intent.

And right here it should be understood that the character of delegates, as men, is of far less importance than is the mode of appointing them. It is safer and more compatible with the true intent of free and repre-

sentative government, to accept mediocrity selected in strict accord with intent, than to choose the highest ability through methods which are subversive of free and representative government. This, I take it, was the view of the several speakers to whose observations and suggestions on the subject we have listened to-night.

To what they have said, I add the further suggestion that it might be a safeguard for free representative government to provide by law for a system of franchise police, who should serve free on election days, and have charge of all matters preservative of the integrity of the franchise. Such police could number several hundred thousand, for all the United States ; could be changed often, and chosen from all the ranks of the people.

Lastly, let me say that the question of reforms, insuring the integrity of the franchise, is important and pertinent to our inquiry, for it may be safely admitted that such reforms lie in the path of general amelioration. But that reforms in the franchise alone, and nothing further, can bring amelioration, I am not prepared at this time to admit.

It may be in order to proceed with our inquiry, on the lines originally laid down.

Mr. Moore.—I move that the subject for our next meeting be “The Industrial and the Social Question.” I propose this subject because it seems to me to be next in order, and closely identified with the topic under discussion to-night.

Mr. Valanti.—I second the motion ; and, with the consent of the mover, add that Mr. Moore be the censor for our next meeting.

The motion having been amended by the appointment of Mr. Valanti as first speaker, the meeting adjourned.



CHAPTER VI

MUST ONE STAND IDLE ?

“ WON’T you tell us about the meeting, Joseph ? ”
said Dorothy next morning, as we sat down to breakfast.

“ About the men, or what they said ? ”

“ Both.”

“ Oh, the men were serious and thoughtful, and impressed me favourably. I did n’t suppose workingmen could appear so well.”

“ But what did they look like, and what did they say ? ”

“ I can’t repeat what they said, but they all seemed very much in earnest. And their remarks were perhaps more intelligent than might be expected from an equal number of our own friends, taken at random. I can thank them for an instructive evening.” And I described the appearance of the men as well as I could, to the seeming edification not only of Dorothy, but of my aunt and uncle, who had by this time become listeners.

“ And now,” I added, “ as the report must be nearly type written, if you all really want to hear it, and will come into the library, we can read it.”

“ But,” persisted Dorothy, “ did n’t they have beer

at this meeting, and garlic, and sour-kraut, and boiled pork, and rye bread? And did n't you all smoke clay pipes? You must have seen some interesting slum-life, a wake, or sweat-shops, or something. What kind of slang did they use?"

"I regret to confess," I replied, "that I had none of these interesting experiences. The men seemed much like other men."

"So I suppose, in a way,—two eyes, two ears, and so forth. But what were the real differences? How were they different from us, Joseph? Come, tell us, it will be so interesting!"

"I might pick out some little characteristics that would amuse you," said I, "but now that I've seen the men I feel that would be unkind. It has no real bearing on their merit. You must remember that people who live in tenement houses are as effectually shut off from contact socially with us as if they lived at the north pole and we at the south. We are surprised on reading of the severity of the Romish decree of excommunication in times when that church exercised its greatest power. But I fail to see how our ban of social excommunication is less restrictive."

"So you have turned socialist, have you, after all?" exclaimed my uncle. "Perhaps anarchist too!"

"You'd better search him, Uncle," laughed Dorothy. "He may have some dynamite bombs concealed about him. Or you might meet him half-way, and do what you're able to break down social barriers. Invite his new acquaintances to one of our receptions. Our friends will be pleased to know all the Irish hod-carriers, German pretzel-bakers, Jewish sweat-shop tailors, Italian organ-grinders, negro whitewashers, Danish sailors and American Bowery boys!"

"Joseph," said my uncle, "there's only one other kind of man your club needs, to make the happy family complete, and that's a Chinaman."

I replied to this badinage by a smile, and devoted myself to my breakfast.

When breakfast was concluded, all gathered in the library to listen to the report, which I read through without interruption or comment. At the conclusion, as no one spoke, I said,

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"The speeches seem harmless," replied my uncle, between the whiffs of his cigar; "but then, it's hardly fair to judge by this session. They are evidently warming up, and next meeting there may be enough communism and anarchy to satisfy even Herr Most. The literary style, however, is naturally weak and amateurish. Fisher seems to be a dyspeptic, and the other five show about the average ability of grammar-school pupils."

"Oh, Mr. Morton!" cried Dorothy. "How can you say so? For my part, I think the speeches are very good indeed, considering they were made by tenement-house people. Some of them are quite original. And what exalted patriotism! Besides, there are some excellent suggestions."

"No suggestions worth consideration," said my uncle. "And where is the originality?"

"I am sure," Aunt Barbara remarked, "there was one valuable suggestion, and that an original one,—the National Academy of Music for negroes at Washington. That would surely tend to elevate the coloured people."

"And what an appropriate parable that was," said Dorothy, "illustrating the contributions which different races have made to the Republic!"

"Very well," replied my uncle; "but why go to the slums for all this, when history and sociology can be studied so much better right in this library?"

"So you suggested the other day," said I, "and I adopted your suggestion, and have since put in some time among these books. But do the books generally give a correct impression? For instance, let me show you one author's opinion on that question."

And going to the bookcase, I took up Thorold Rogers's *The Economic Interpretation of History*. "Here, Dorothy," I said, "won't you read on page 310, the last paragraph?"

So Dorothy read:

"Most writers on political economy have been persons in easy circumstances, or have been intimates of those who are in easy circumstances. They have witnessed, with interested or sympathetic satisfaction, the growth of wealth in the class to which they belong, or with which they have been familiar. In their eyes the poverty of industry has been a puzzle, a nuisance, a problem, a social crime. They have every sympathy with the man who wins and saves, no matter how, but they have not been very considerate for the man who works. They lecture the poor on their improvidence, their recklessness, on the waste of their habits. But I have never read any of their works in which they have raised the question as to whether these traits in the character of workmen, assuming them to be true, are not historically traceable to some manipulation of the processes by which wealth is distributed, processes which they candidly and truly inform you are of human institution only."

My uncle threw away his cigar as she finished reading.

"All this talk about classes is nonsense," said he. "We have no classes in this country. The poorest workingman has a chance to become rich, and the richest man may become poor."

"True," I remarked; "but also true of the Chinaman and the Russian. Is there a more equitable basis for the distribution of wealth in America than there is in China or Russia?"

"I seem to be in the minority here," said Uncle Harry, with a smile, "and quite unpopular; but still I wish to observe that there is a vast difference between this country and those you name. There is hardly a comparison to be made between them. This country has many more opportunities. Here, every man can be the architect of his own fortune, and can climb for himself. No better evidence of this need be offered than the fact that, while few Americans go abroad to seek their fortunes, millions of foreigners come to this country for that purpose.

"If among these millions of immigrants there is a large proportion of shiftless, careless and improvident riff-raff, are we to blame? Is it your business or mine to wander through the land and hunt them up, in order to ameliorate their self-chosen lot of poverty? As well try to balance on your finger a ten-foot fish pole, small end down. You might cure one of laziness, but not of drunkenness; another of violent temper, but not of extravagance; and so on through the entire gamut of causes that breed incompetency and poverty. In merchandise what is damaged or out of date is offered for sale as a job-lot, below cost. Just so with the incompetent portion of humanity. They are the social 'job-lots,' and such they will ever be."

"I confess," said Dorothy, "that I am much interested. But what we read gives one side of the question, and what you say gives another. I should like to study it."

"The books are here," replied my uncle.

"Yes, but I detest books on political economy; they are so filled with statistics and things I don't understand. I might as well try to read Hebrew. If I were a man, I should try to get my information first hand, from the workingmen, as Joseph is doing."

"And what would you do with the information when you got it?" asked my uncle.

"Well," said Dorothy, "that would depend on what it was. If I found any injustice which I could remedy, ought I not to try to remedy it?"

"Would you be ready to pay the penalty?" said my uncle.

"I don't understand," Dorothy replied.

"No," my uncle rejoined, "neither you nor Joseph have any conception of the matter. Just let the world jog along. Don't try to set it a new pace. You can find many pleasanter and more profitable things to do. Other people have tried, and have had their pains for their reward, most of them. Ridicule greets you at the outset, and if you persist you are a crank. Success means a crown of thorns. But if you both are bubbling over with benevolence and zeal to do something, then take money and give it, but give through trustworthy agents, who will take the burden of pouring into the open palms ever eager to receive it, whatever sum you set aside for charity. And as I love you both, let me beg you to beware that dangerous, treacherous, thankless apparition called 'reform,' which has led so many men to ruin."

"Why," said Dorothy, "must one stand idle because he fears harm or loves ease? Shall he confess himself a slave?"

"This same thought," I interposed, "took me to last night's club meeting. And I shall go again."

“ And so would I, if I were a man,” said Dorothy.

“ How is the world to progress,” I asked, “ if we are satisfied to let things alone and think only of ourselves? ”

“ Does the responsibility for the world’s progress rest on you? ” said my uncle. “ The trouble lies in your tenacity. You are as stubborn as your father was, only he was much more practical. Chance has led you among a set of professional agitators. You are asked to have nothing more to do with them, and you reply that you value liberty. Has anyone suggested depriving you of your liberty? Suppose a while ago I had asked you to hob-nob with day-labourers, to go about in the slums, and to take up practical philanthropy? Who would have been the objector? ”

“ To illustrate what I mean, let me tell you this. You have played at see-saw when you were a child. You know that two children can sit still on opposite ends of the plank balancing, and there is no motion,— they get no ride. But let each alternately change his position and they ride; first one is up, then the other. Now suppose labour on one end of the plank and capital on the other; then comes movement in the industrial and commercial world. But these brainless agitators and socialists want labour and capital to balance. There is an end of movement. Capital and industry cease to exist for any purpose, and we relapse from civilisation into barbarism.”

“ But,” said I, “ is the illustration a fair one? I should rather suppose two children playing at donkey cart, one the donkey, one the driver. One whips and drives, the other is whipped and driven.”

“ As you will,” replied my uncle. “ You have your choice of being donkey or driver.

“ And, to speak more directly to the point,” he added, “ consider your own interest. You have a fair income, but you spend nearly all of it, interest and profit. You are not accumulating money. You are about to marry, and will hardly need less money married than single. Will you take any step that will materially reduce your income at a time when you need it most ? ”

“ How will mere attendance at these meetings, or interest in these questions, constitute such a step ? ” I asked.

“ In this way,” replied my uncle. “ Your investments are largely in dwelling-houses and in lots on which you propose to build. Much of the property is in the poorer sections of the city, and some of it in the poorest. Up to this time the rents have been successfully collected, and such evicting as was necessary has been done,—all by your real estate agent. Now let it once be known that you are a philanthropist, a friend of labour, and you will have no trouble in renting your tenements ; they will all be occupied. But as to collecting your rents, that will be another matter. Nor can you, in your new attitude, do any evicting. And when it comes to building there will be no end of trouble. Once get the reputation of being a friend of labour, and scrub contractors will play their familiar tricks on you, until in time you find that all this meddling has cost you a third or half your income.”

“ But, Uncle,” said Dorothy, “ when we are married Joseph can have my income too, and that will make it up.”

“ Even so, Dorothy,” said my uncle, “ why should Joseph reduce his net income from six to three per cent. on his investment ? What a difference there is,” he added reflectively, “ between this and the pioneer

generation ! Do you think my brother and I, at your age, spent our time in theorising ? No, sir ! We rolled up our sleeves and set to work, and as a result we attained to something. You, Joseph, with your advantages, and with equal energy, ought to become a multi-millionaire."

"I have no ambition for any material increase of wealth," I replied. "And as the club which has caused all this discussion is not a labour organisation at all, but simply an association of ordinary men who are studying, as best they can, various social questions, I fail to see how my slight connection with them will bring about the results you predict. Besides, why not enter this field of action if it proves as congenial to my tastes as money-making was to yours ? What pleasure in accumulating without real need or desire for accumulation ? May not investigation result in ultimate good ? And may not the ultimate good be worth more than the money it has cost ?"

My uncle sighed, but made no reply, and the discussion ceased for the time being.





CHAPTER VII

THE EVICTION

THE first visitor to enter the library the following day was Dorothy, who walked gravely in, took a seat near me, and said, "Now, Joseph, tell me something about evictions."

"What is it you want to know?" I asked.

"Everything. You remember, yesterday Mr. Morton talked about 'necessary evictions.' What are they?"

"Now that you mention it," said I, "you remind me that I don't know, except in the most general way. I have never been brought into contact with the tenants. This is all done by the agent."

"But I thought they only had evictions in Ireland."

"Well, it seems they have them here too."

"Joseph," urged Dorothy, "if they have evictions here, and on your property, it must be done for you and in your name, and I should think you would want to know all about it."

"So I do," said I, "though the subject has never occurred to me. And I suppose the best way is to go down to the agent's office and find out."

"May I go with you?" Dorothy asked.

"Why, yes, of course," I replied; "I should be glad to have you come."

We lost no time in starting on our errand, but left the house, took the car, and in a few minutes had disembarked at Broadway and Twenty-third Street, and entered the office of the agent. He came forward, greeted us, and invited us into his private office.

"What can I do for you to-day, Mr. Morton?" said he.

"I want some information," I replied, "about my tenement properties."

"Well," he said, opening a book containing maps of blocks of houses, "here is your Houston Street property. That is in first-rate shape,—the expenses for repairs are down to a minimum, and we have pushed the rents up as high as we can get them. I can't say quite so much for your Bleeker Street and Christopher Street properties."

"How about evictions?" I inquired.

"We seldom have any. I am very fortunate in that respect."

"How fortunate?"

"Well, I don't like to brag. I would rather show my ability by the rents I turn over to my clients. I think your uncle appreciates what I do in that direction."

"No doubt I shall appreciate it equally," said I, "when I become more familiar with the details."

"You see the results of the details in the rents," replied the agent. "These tenements are bringing in higher interest than Fifth Avenue property."

"That may be," I said. "But what about the evictions?"

"There is little to tell. I have so few."

"How do you manage it?"

"Well," answered the agent, "that is one of the arts of the business. First is the choice of tenants. I select only those I believe to be sure pay. Then there is the style of collecting. There is where skill comes in. Just let a collector show a weak front, let him have a soft head, and listen to the thousand and one excuses, and there's no rent paying. The secret is to have a determined front, deaf ears, and eyes that see only rent in full on the day it's due. Now to-day, at two o'clock, in this tenement,"—pointing to the map—"we evict a family. First eviction in three months; but out they go at two P.M."

The agent's manner indicated the pride he felt in his professional skill, which he evidently expected to have its due effect upon me. I thanked him for his information, he expressed his appreciation of the trust reposed in him, and I took my leave.

"Joseph," said Dorothy, when we were outside, "did you notice the address?"

"Of the eviction?" I asked. "Yes, Houston Street, near Orchard."

"Let us go there."

"Very well," I replied, "but you won't like the neighbourhood."

We walked to Fourth Avenue, took a car to the corner of Houston Street and the Bowery, and then proceeded down Houston Street to the corner of Orchard. I had not often seen this property, but I had a general recollection of its location. On directing our steps toward it, we observed, near the entrance to the house, a number of children and grown persons, perhaps a dozen in all, grouped in a semicircle on the sidewalk and street. In the centre of the group,

seated beside a pile of household furniture, was a girl of ten, sobbing, as she slowly tied together the corners of a handkerchief in which lay some personal belongings. Beside her, a child of three or four was playing contentedly among tins and frying-pans, while a boy, a few years older, stood disconsolate, bawling loudly, with his two dirty fists pressed against his face.

The crowd gave way a moment, and out from the hallway came two men, bearing a stove, which they added to the collection on the sidewalk. This collection seemed now to be complete, for the two men, after setting down the stove, pulled off their hats, wiped their foreheads, and moved away toward Orchard Street. Last, there came from the hall door a middle-aged woman, apparently a German. A rusty black shawl was drawn over her head and shoulders, and over a bundle which she carried in her arms. A few plaintive cries, coming from under the shawl, showed that she was carrying an infant. The woman gazed about her, saying nothing, and apparently not noticing the crowd, which had by this time increased. Walking with uncertain steps to the edge of the sidewalk, she sat down on the curb, bent her head, and, drawing forward the shawl so as almost to hide her countenance, she rocked slowly back and forth, singing—or moaning—in a low voice, what seemed to be a song to the infant in her arms.

At the corner of the street a policeman had been standing. He now sauntered down toward the crowd, stopped at the pile of household goods on the sidewalk, then walked toward the woman and touched her on the shoulder.

“Here,” said he. “You must take these things off the sidewalk.”

The woman drew back her shawl, and looked up at the policeman blankly.

"These things have got to get off the sidewalk," said he. "Do you understand? And you, too, or I'll have to take you along."

One of the men who had been standing in the crowd, —a thick-set man, hatless, in his shirt-sleeves, and smoking a pipe,—walked up to the policeman.

"Officer," he said, "wait a minute. Let's see if we can't fix this up for her." Then turning, he walked back to the crowd and said: "Friends, this is none of our affairs, but her husband is in the hospital. Can we raise enough to put her back in the house? Does anybody want to put in with me? Here's mine." And he took from his pocket a half-dollar.

Dorothy had been much moved. "How pitiful!" she said, "I am going over to her."

"No," said I, "not yet. Wait and see what happens."

Glancing about me I observed, among the persons who, attracted by the crowd, were moving down from Houston Street, a figure that seemed familiar. It was my friend Bradley, the plumber, in his working clothes, and carrying on his shoulder a bag of tools. He bowed and was about to pass us without speaking, when I stopped him.

"Mr. Bradley," I said, "have you a minute or two to devote to a little work of humanity on my account?"

"By all means, Mr. Morton," he replied.

"Then will you go over and find out how much balance is needed to pay that woman's rent and put her back in her rooms? I want to contribute what is needed, but I prefer not to appear."

Bradley went over, interviewed the hatless man, who

was still collecting subscriptions, spoke to the policeman, and disappeared into the building. Shortly he came back with a report.

"The amount due for rent is ten dollars. The crowd has so far raised about four dollars and a half. But the collector, who is still in the building, refuses to accept the money even if all of it is offered. He says he can't afford to take back an evicted tenant, and anyway he is not sure she will be able to pay the next month's rent."

"Thank you, Mr. Bradley," I said. "I shall have to attend to it myself then."

So saying, I walked over to the house, accompanied by Dorothy, whose changing expressions had shown the sympathetic interest she took. We ascended two flights of stairs, and met on the landing a man, evidently the collector, who was in the act of locking the door of one of the tenements.

"Here is the money for that woman's rent," I said, addressing him and offering a ten-dollar bill. "I want you to put her right back."

"Since when do I take orders from you?" he replied.

"You will take them now," said I. "I happen to be the owner of the building."

The man looked at me sullenly. "I got my orders from my employer," he said, "and my orders were to put these people out. If there's anything different you'll have to fix it with him."

"Come with me to the telephone," I answered.

We all went out, through the crowd of staring spectators to the drug store, where, going to the telephone, I called up the agent at his office.

"I am Mr. Morton," said I, "and I am near my Houston Street tenement. The woman you evicted has

now tendered the rent due, and I want you to instruct your collector to accept the money and put her back."

"The collector will accept, in our name, any orders you give him about your property, Mr. Morton," came the answer; "but I wish you would find time to call here soon on the same matter."

"Very well," I replied.

As soon as the collector had received his orders he followed us to the door of the tenement building, where, amid the grins of the crowd, he accepted the ten-dollar bill from me, signed a receipt for it, and handed over the key.

"This has been a bad day's work for you, sir," were his last words, as he walked away.

I approached the German woman, who was standing bewildered near the curb, and offered her the key. She gazed at me for an instant, stretched out her hand toward me, then suddenly dropped it, turned away and burst into weeping. I gave the key to the ten-year-old girl, who smiled, laughed, took it and darted into the house.

The hatless man approached, his hand full of silver, which he offered to me. I shook my head. He looked toward the crowd.

"Here," said he. "Anybody that wants his money, come up and get it. If there's any left I'll give it to her." And, having waited long enough to see that the crowd made no movement to recover its gift, he went up to the German woman. "It's all right," he said, pouring the silver into her lap. "Now we'll move you back. What goes first, the stove?" And he grasped it, raised it half from the sidewalk, and looked around for help. Bradley, who was one of the nearest to him, put down his bag of tools and seized

the other side of the stove, which was quickly on its way upstairs. Other men stepped forward from the crowd, and it was evident that the stock of household goods would soon be back in the accustomed places. Dorothy and I turned away.

"Joseph," she said, "it was splendid, was n't it?"

"It does seem splendid to have prevented injustice, and to have turned a family's misery into happiness," said I. "At least we think so. But there is probably one man who won't agree with us,—the agent. We can stop and see him now if you like. I suppose he will strongly object to our action in the matter."

The agent came forward with an air of great politeness when we were announced. A smile of superiority and pity seemed to play upon his countenance as we seated ourselves in his private office; and he began:

"Mr. Morton, I congratulate you on the sympathy you show for your delinquent tenants. I assure you, I have very few clients who would allow such a feeling to upset their whole system of rent collecting. I am afraid I don't quite understand what your policy is to be, and I took the liberty of asking you to call, so that we might come to some understanding."

"I have formulated no policy," I said, "and I certainly want my rents collected. But I would as certainly rescue any unfortunate woman from the clutches of a brutal evictor, and be glad of the chance. I suppose you were ignorant of the circumstances of the case, and did n't know the poor woman's husband was sick in the hospital."

"Yes, we knew it," replied the agent. "We knew the circumstances. The man is sober, and prompt when he has work."

"Then why not take that into consideration?"

" We did."

" How? "

" Well, if it were only a question of that particular tenant, we might let it go. But we have to consider the effect on the others, and to-day's eviction would have been a most excellent example. It would have shown those people that no excuse is good on rent day. If they understand the owner interfered with the collector, and ordered an evicted tenant put back, there 's an end of rent in that quarter."

" What would the poor woman have done," I asked, " left in the street with her three small children? "

" What will you do with them next month if they don't pay their rent? " asked the agent. " Or six months or a year from now? You are out ten dollars already, and that 's the least of it. I don't suppose you are going to turn your properties into charitable institutions. A man can do his duty toward unfortunate humanity by contributing to the regular charitable organisations, as I do, as the collector, who you said was brutal, perhaps does. But every man who knows anything about business must understand where charity ends and business begins. Now of course you see that if our regular methods are to be upset as they have been to-day, why naturally there 's no use in our attempting to manage your collections. In fact we should hardly care to. It would injure our business reputation. I would suggest, if I may, that you talk the matter over with your uncle, who is a thorough business man. He is familiar with our methods, and can give you information that otherwise you may have to get by costly and bitter experience."

" Thank you, I will consider it," said I, as Dorothy and I took our leave.



CHAPTER VIII

HUMANITY AND BUSINESS.

WHEN we were once more in the library, Dorothy, who during the journey home had been silent and abstracted, did not sit down, but paced backward and forward, until, suddenly stopping, she looked into my face, and said, "No, I can't make them fit."

"Make what fit?" I inquired.

"Humanity and business."

"Nor can I."

"When I listen to your uncle and the real estate agent, and hear the business side, it seems reasonable,—they seem right. But when I try to harmonise their principles with Christianity, and compare their standard with what ought to be the standard of a Christian, there is a great gap I can't explain. I wish I could, but they don't fit—they don't fit."

"Do you think," I asked, "that I would better give up meddling with the workingmen's affairs?"

"Perhaps so," replied Dorothy, absently. Then, correcting herself, she gazed into my eyes intently, and said with solemn earnestness, "No—a thousand times no! Continue, with these workingmen, to search for truth. It may be that a plan will be devised to

harmonise business and humanity ; if so we will give all our aid to materialise it. We are able to help spread the idea if it is once found. We can start clubs for that purpose among the rich."

" But suppose such a plan shall be discovered," said I, " and we do give our aid to it. What if it is opposed to the current laws of business, and our support of it swallows up my fortune ? "

" Then take mine, too," said Dorothy, " and when both are gone we can work as millions of others have to."

" I am proud of you, Dorothy," I replied. " You give me the courage of my convictions."

After a short pause she said, " Joseph, there is a way in which you can oblige me very much. Will you ? "

" What is it ? "

" Say yes, and I will tell you."

" Well, yes."

Dorothy laughed and clapped her hands. " Now I have your promise, and you must keep it. Take me to a meeting of the workingmen's club."

" Impossible."

" But you promised."

" How can I take you, Dorothy ? In the first place, it 's not quite right for you to be in that quarter of the city late at night. Then I don't know enough yet about the club myself. Perhaps later I may find some way."

" And meantime, perhaps I may find a way of my own," said she, gaily. " I have made up my mind. You shall see. And I have my speech all ready. Fellow-citizens,—" she began, waving her hand to an imaginary audience.

The library door opened and my uncle and aunt entered. " What 's this ? " said my uncle, with a broad smile on his face.

"Uncle," exclaimed Dorothy, without changing her posture, "will you do me a favour?"

"Certainly," replied my uncle, unsuspectingly.

"And you mean it, don't you?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Honestly?"

"Yes."

"Then please invite the club to meet in this library."

"What club?" asked my uncle, a little red in the face.

"The workingmen's club."

"I'll invite it to meet in Patagonia," my uncle replied. "I wish it was there or at the bottom of the sea."

"Why, Uncle!" said Dorothy. "Are you going to break your word?"

"You cannot be serious, Dorothy," said my uncle, speaking with much vehemence. "You know I can grant no such favour as that. I can hardly be expected to invite Jew, Irish, German, Italian, and negro mechanics into my house. Our friends would think me crazy, and so I should be. Besides, these men are unquestionably paid agitators, communists and anarchists. They shall never be in my house while I live."

"But before you say yes or no," Dorothy urged, "let me show you some reasons for granting the favour you promised."

"Dorothy," my uncle said gravely, and in a voice trembling with agitation, "the persistence that you and Joseph show in this mistaken course gives me much pain. I see in it the possibility of disaster to yourselves and the frustration of all my plans. In that case," he added, pointing to it, "is a copy of my will: a paper that insures to Joseph all the property that my wife

and I shall leave,—six million dollars, approximately, beyond his own comfortable fortune. Those six millions were not earned for the benefit of anarchists and socialists, and I cannot run the risk of having them squandered in visionary schemes. Rather than expose my money to that chance I must leave it where I know it will do some good,—to charitable institutions—and not a cent to Joseph or to you. Is your workingmen's club worth throwing away six millions for?"

My aunt interposed. "Henry," said she, "why not listen to the reasons Dorothy wants to give? It can do no harm."

"Very well," replied my uncle, "I will listen."

Dorothy tried to speak, but my uncle's earnestness and excitement had affected her so that she hesitated and looked appealingly toward me. I hastened to express what I believed to be in her mind.

"Most of us," I said, "are so constituted that we must have some incentive to action, or we lapse into misery or melancholy. Take your own case or that of my father. At my age your incentive was money-making. Dorothy and I have no need of more money, and do not feel that motive. A subject new to us has been brought to our attention in a peculiar and forceful way, and leads us into a course of action which is interesting and congenial, and in which we may find our duty as well as our pleasure. To urge us to abandon it would be as though some one in your early years had asked you to give up the idea of making money. Your generous intention I value as an evidence of your deep affection for us. My abstaining from efforts at money-making will show that I am not influenced by hope of gain. And with all regard and thankfulness to you, I acquiesce cheerfully in your disposing to

charitable institutions of such property as you had intended for me.’”

“And I,” said Dorothy, who had now regained her composure, “agree with everything Joseph has said. As I have less claim than he on your kindness and love, the knowledge of your generous intentions puts me under greater obligations toward you. But I should do violence to my own conscience, and should lower the value of my gratitude, were I to repress the promptings of my better nature and be guided by a base motive in making my choice.

“Now let me try to collect my thoughts and show you some of the reasons I had for asking as a favour that these men meet at this house. And of course the matter itself is not of so much importance. It is the principle which we have really been talking of,—whether Joseph and I shall interest ourselves in these working people to the extent of hearing their side of the case. We do not yet commit ourselves; we are not champions of the labouring classes. Our interest may lead to nothing. But we see something before us to investigate, and we want to feel free to do so.

“And why not approach this as we should approach any psychological experiment? What is the situation? Why, everybody, the workingmen and ourselves, seem to be overflowing with prejudice; on our side intense antipathy and antagonism toward the workingman, and on his side suspicion and suppressed hatred of us. Just about the same feeling that existed in Rome between the Patricians and Plebeians, is it not? In fact this growing intensity of ill-feeling toward the poor must tend to make them like the helots of Greece, slaves of slaves, bondmen and bondwomen forever. Is this what Washington fought for? Is this the

meaning of the Declaration of Independence? Is this what Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Webster, Clay, and Lincoln taught?

"Just look out of this window," she said, drawing aside the curtain. "See those liveried men sitting in front and back of those aristocratic carriages. See the coats of arms on the carriage panels, with their crests and escutcheons. How amusing it would all be if its real tendency were not so brutally degrading, so foreign to the ideal standard of liberty set by the fathers of the Republic! Are we to shut our eyes and ears against these evidences of a growing degeneracy? If so, let us at least institute a real hereditary aristocracy whose authority shall seem less offensive than that of yesterday's butcher, peddler, or junk-dealer.

"But to come more to the point. Some new and vivid impressions have lately been received by Joseph and myself. In our minds now, two conflicting impulses are operating:—one created by our dim perception of a duty and an opportunity; the other by our desire to please you. In following your wishes without the approbation of our conscience we should be false to ourselves. We are strongly prompted to believe that this antagonism between rich and poor, in which we have all shared, is largely the result of prejudice. Why not test this, for everybody's sake? And what better way than to let these men come here,—see them, listen to them, and then form a just and unbiassed opinion of them and their cause?"

"I must admit, Henry," said my aunt, "that there is a good deal of sense in what Dorothy says. You can easily point out to these two enthusiastic young persons the reasons for your position, when they have been once brought into contact with these working

people. And our prejudices, if we have any, can be removed in the same way."

"But I don't know these men," protested my uncle. "How can I ask them here?"

"You need not invite them," Aunt Barbara replied. "Joseph can do that. He has already done them a service by sending his stenographer to their meeting."

"They need not be asked here at all," said I. "My lawyer's office is on Broadway, near Union Square, and I feel sure he will give me the use of it in the evening. Then Dorothy can go too."

"How nice that will be!" exclaimed Dorothy. "But," she added, after a moment's pause, "I hardly like to be the only woman there. I wish there might be someone with me."

"I will go with you," said Aunt Barbara.

My uncle looked from one to another of us for a moment, with an expression of amazement on his face. Then, breaking into a laugh, he rose from his chair.

"The conspirators have won!" said he. "Go ahead. Invite them, and have the meeting in this library."

"You dear, good uncle-in-law that-is-to-be!" exclaimed Dorothy, as she rushed over and kissed Mr. Morton. "How kind you are!"

"Perhaps, Uncle Harry," I said, "it would be pleasanter for you if we did n't have these men here."

"On the contrary," he answered, "I am now quite as anxious as you are to have this experiment tried. I want to see for myself whether I really have prejudices, and if I have, I want to know why. I came from the working classes myself, you know, and I assure you I have no prejudice against honest, sober, industrious and law-abiding workingmen. What I object to is the

professional agitator and loafer. So now you may as well write your invitation."

Wheeling my chair toward my desk, I wrote as follows :

"NEW YORK, Tuesday, February 7, 1899.

"*To the President and Members of the Twentieth Century Club—*

"*Gentlemen* : I shall be glad to have you hold your next regular meeting in the library of my residence. If agreeable to you, I ask that Mr. and Mrs. Morton and another friend of mine, a lady, be permitted to be present.

"Yours very truly,

"JOSEPH MORTON."

"What do you think of that?" said I, handing the letter to my uncle.

He read it aloud. "That will do," he answered, as he returned it to me.

When Mr. and Mrs. Morton had left the room, I turned to Dorothy.

"You have missed your vocation," said I.

"What do you mean?" she asked, coming toward me with a smile on her face.

"I mean that you would have made a success as a lawyer. Nothing shows that better than the victory you have just won."

"I must be off," she replied, blushing, "or you may compliment me more than I deserve. So good-bye." And she held out her cheek for a kiss.





CHAPTER IX

THE INEFFECTABLE DIVIDING LINE

ON the afternoon of the next day I was writing at my desk when the outer door opened and Dorothy hurried in, flushed and quite out of breath.

"Now, I must ask you to do something else for me, Joseph," she said. "You will, won't you?"

"Without hesitation," I replied. "What is it?"

"Write me an order on your real estate agent, telling him to appoint that evicted woman care-taker for some of your Houston Street property."

"But how am I to know whether there is a vacancy, and whether the woman is competent?"

"I found all that out this morning when I went to see the woman. She told me about the place, and said she felt sure she could give entire satisfaction. There are several applicants already, and I want to get the position for her right away before it is filled. So will you please write out the order on the agent and I'll go down with it now?"

"Very good," I said; "but there is a quicker way of reaching the agent." So, going to the telephone, I rang him up.

"Is there a position as care-taker or janitor vacant

on my Houston Street property?" I asked, when the agent had replied to my call.

"Yes, but we already have applications from several competent persons."

"I wish you would consider favorably someone who has been recommended to me as suitable, and whom I should be glad to have appointed."

"Very well," answered the agent; "I will try to please you."

"Thank you. Miss Hamilton, whom you saw with me at your office, will call on you to-morrow in relation to the matter."

"So that is settled," said I, turning to Dorothy. "It was truly thoughtful of you to assume the gracious task of a sister of charity."

"Whom do you suppose I met in this woman's rooms?" Dorothy asked. "A Miss Selner, sister of the man who is president of that club. Mr. Bradley had carried the news of the eviction, and so Mr. Selner brought his sister, thinking she might be of help. I introduced myself to both."

"What do you think of them?" said I.

"I scarcely saw Mr. Selner long enough to form an opinion of him, but I talked half an hour with his sister. She is an unusually attractive girl, and has an air of refinement which her inexpensive clothes do not conceal. She is perhaps twenty years old, and very prepossessing, with dark, regular features, something like her brother's. Her expression and manner show a highly nervous and sympathetic temperament."

At this point my uncle and aunt entered the library.

"Here is your club's reply, Joseph," said my uncle, handing me a letter. "Let us hear what they say."

I broke the envelope and read :

“TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB,
“NEW YORK, Feb. 10, 1899.

“MR. JOSEPH MORTON—

“*Dear Sir* : Your esteemed favour inviting this club to hold its next regular meeting in the library of your residence has been the subject of a special meeting. We regret to say that we are unable to avail ourselves of your kind offer.

“In our opinion, such a meeting at your home would tend to injure us, collectively and individually, among our neighbours and associates. We fear it might be misinterpreted, and might subject us to misrepresentation.

“Thanking you for your offer, we are,

“Yours very truly,

“THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB,
“ANTONIO VALANTI, Sec’y.

“Well, who would have thought it !” exclaimed my uncle.

“You see,” said Dorothy, “it takes two to make a bargain.”

“I can’t understand what harm it would do them to come to this house, can you, Henry ?” Mrs. Morton asked.

“Well, yes,” said my uncle. “They may be ‘walking delegates,’ or labour leaders, or in the employ of labour unions, and if so their holding a meeting in a rich man’s house might jeopardise their positions or weaken their influence. But I may misjudge them.”

“I am glad to see that you have qualified your opinion, Uncle Harry,” said I.

“How strange it is,” interposed my aunt, “that there should be this ineffaceable dividing line between rich and poor !”

“Very strange indeed,” Dorothy replied, “if we are

to judge by our own experience. We start by refusing to have these men in our house. After an exhaustive argument we decide that our refusal is unsocial and wrong, and we invite them. Then they decline to come.

"With all our boasted enlightenment," she added, "with all our modern ideas of freedom, how much have we advanced in practical social science beyond India or ancient Greece? We have our helots and our sudras, and would no more invite a workingman or his wife to meet us socially than if we were Spartans or Brahmins. I wonder if this will always be so."

"I think not," I replied. "Certain forces are at work in the social economy which must in time produce changes that now would seem radical. Institutions democratic in name have existed since ancient times, but the democracy of to-day is an innovation. Our helot has a voice in the shaping of the government,—his vote, which cannot be taken from him. His weakness is in his lack of organisation and concerted effort. Should the whole helot class unite and concentrate its strength, the force at its disposal would be irresistible, and it could modify or even radically change the whole social system."

"It might change the political system," remarked my uncle; "not the social system."

"But if the law of development is ever ceaselessly at work in every direction," I urged, "must it not operate in the social economy?"

"Undoubtedly," said my uncle; "though not suddenly or perceptibly. In contemplating the vast and striking changes of the organic and inorganic world, we at first think of these changes as sudden. But in reality the cataclysms are rare. The great changes have

gone on, are going on, unnoticed. Thus of social and political life. During Queen Elizabeth's reign, political offenders were drawn and quartered, and robbers were hanged. In Luther's time, burning at the stake was a normal punishment for disagreement with the Church. To-day the world is more humane, and its humanity is growing. Changes cannot be directed by resolutions or ordered by agitators. The world's progress goes on quietly and unobserved, while each one of us attends faithfully to his own business in his own way."

"To come back for a minute to the club," said Dorothy, "must we abandon the idea of a meeting in this house?"

"Joseph might go to see the president," suggested my aunt. "Quite likely a little persuasion may change their minds."

"A good idea," I said. "I will see him to-morrow."





CHAPTER X

GENTLEMEN

“DO you care to be with us when we make our call upon your real estate agent, Joseph?” asked my aunt, the following morning, as she and Dorothy, clothed in street costumes and bonnets, and therefore a little late for breakfast, swept into the dining-room.

“Thanks, Aunt Barbara,” I replied. “I will go down part way with you. You remember I am to call on Ezra this morning.”

“Then will you meet us later at the Houston Street tenement?”

“Yes, indeed.”

We all set out shortly. I left the two ladies at the agent’s office, attended satisfactorily to my own errand, and proceeded to the place of meeting in Houston Street. There I was met by the German woman, who beamed with smiles on seeing me, and showed me into her sitting-room, where I was greeted by my aunt and Dorothy.

“This woman,” said my aunt, “has just been expressing her gratitude to us, and she wants me particularly to thank you on her account for the kindness you did, which she says is one she never met before in all her life.”

"You may thank these ladies," said I to the German woman. "They deserve all the credit."

"They do deserve thanks," she answered, respectfully. "But so do you, for you ordered them to put me back. God bless you for it, sir! It was n't myself I cared for so much as the children and my poor husband."

"And she has the appointment," Dorothy added. "We have arranged it with the agent."

"I had not the slightest doubt of your success in any mission you undertook, Dorothy," said I. "So now that this one is completed, we may go home with our minds quite at ease."

"Wait a few minutes," Dorothy replied. "We want to say good-bye to Miss Selner, who has gone downstairs with one of the children, and will soon be back. But what about the meeting? Did you see about it?"

"Yes, I saw Ezra and Fisher, and put them in a proper frame of mind, I think. They promised to call a special meeting to-night, and to let me know the result. I think our invitation will be accepted."

As I was speaking the door opened, and a young woman entered, leading a child by the hand. Her appearance tallied with the description of Eva Selner which Dorothy had given, and it proved indeed to be she. I was presented to her, and much liked the refinement and gentle charm with which she acknowledged my expression of interest in her brother. She made no effort, however, to continue the conversation beyond replying to my questions, and, going over to the children, who were grouped at the other end of the room, she proceeded to distribute among them some cakes which she had apparently purchased during her absence from the house.

"Joseph," whispered Dorothy, "why not ask her to the club meeting?" I looked toward my aunt, who nodded in approval.

"Miss Selner," said my aunt, going over to where the former stood, and handing her a card, "we shall be glad to have you pay us a visit. And if your brother's club meets at our house, as we hope it will, please consider yourself invited also, so far as we have a right to ask you."

"I thank you, Mrs. Morton," replied Miss Selner, "and shall be glad to come if the meeting is held. I think the members will have no objection to my being present."

We took our departure from the house, and I, having seen the ladies safely on a car, proceeded to Bellevue Hospital. It was after twelve when I reached there, and I was about to inquire for the husband of my evicted tenant, when for the first time it occurred to me that I did not know his name. There was nothing to do but leave, and I was descending the steps when I met, coming up, my acquaintance, Mr. Quail, the negro. I was glad to see him, and promptly asked him for the information.

"Yes, I know the man," said Mr. Quail. "His name is Schubert. I am going to his ward now. Ezra told us about the case, and we have been looking after him a little."

We found the man apparently very ill. "His condition is critical," declared the hospital physician. "He should not have gone so long without medical attention. He kept at work when he ought to have been here."

"Would you object," I asked, "if I sent my physician"—and I gave his name—"to consult with you?"

"Not at all," was the reply, "especially as he is a member of our staff. I shall be glad to see him."

I bade good-bye to the doctor and to Mr. Quail, stepped to the telephone for a moment to give the necessary instructions to my physician, and took my departure.

It was but a few days thereafter when I found among my mail the following letter :

"TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB,
"NEW YORK, Feb. 13, 1899.

"MR. JOSEPH MORTON—

"*Dear Sir* : At a special meeting of this club it was resolved to accept your invitation, and to hold our next regular meeting, as requested, in the library of your residence, on Wednesday evening, February 15th.

"We shall welcome the presence of the friends you name.

"The subject will be 'The Industrial and the Social Question.'

"Discussion, as usual, at 7.45.

"Yours truly,

"THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CLUB,
"ANTONIO VALANTI, Sec'y."

On the morning of the fifteenth my uncle, who had been for some days called away by business, returned to town. He seemed pleased at the acceptance of my invitation, and interested so far that he gave orders for additional chairs to be brought to the library and placed about the large table in the centre of the room. And before half-past seven on that evening all the members of our family were seated there, awaiting the arrival of the members of the club.

We had conversed together for a while when my uncle pulled out his watch. "Eighteen minutes to eight," he observed. "Strange those men are not here !"

I called the butler. "Thomas," said I, "go to the

door and see if there are any signs of the gentlemen we expect."

Thomas did as he was told, and shortly returned. "I see nothing of the gentlemen," he reported. "And, Mr. Morton, if you please, there were three or four labourers here a while ago inquiring for you. I told them to come to-morrow morning. At first they would n't go, so I just shut the door on them."

My uncle half rose from his chair with an expression of mingled anger and amusement on his face. "You rascal!" said he: "those were the gentlemen. Run and call them back—do you hear?"

"But those were not gentlemen," stammered Thomas. "Those were workingmen."

"Go quickly, Thomas," Aunt Barbara interposed. "Ask the men to come back, and say you made a mistake."

Thomas bounded out of the room, and I followed him. At the door I met Ezra and his sister, who had just ascended the steps. Conducting them into the house, and presenting them to my aunt, I hurried out, and, a few blocks away, near the elevated station, I was fortunate enough to find the five remaining members of the club, standing in a group, and evidently discussing their curious experience.

"Gentlemen," said I, "let me apologise for the mistake of the servant, who did not know that you were expected, and who failed to recognise you. I hope you will be good enough to come back with me and to excuse the incident."

The apology was received pleasantly, and the men accompanied me to the house, where I took them to the library and presented each member to my uncle, Mrs. Morton and Dorothy.

"We are very sorry for the mistake that occurred," said my uncle, "and I trust you will overlook it."

"Certainly, Mr. Morton," Bradley replied. "Please give yourself no uneasiness on that account."

The club members seated themselves about the table, and the stenographer, at his desk, took down the caption of his report :

Report of a meeting of the Twentieth Century Club, held in the library of the residence of Mr. Henry Morton, Wednesday, 8-10 P.M., February 15, 1899.

Ezra.—The meeting will now come to order. The Secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting.

Scarcely had the Secretary begun his reading when Thomas appeared at the door, out of breath, and holding his hat in his hand. "I could not find them," he exclaimed. Then, as he perceived the men seated about the table, his expression became one of blank surprise, and he stood in the doorway gazing stupidly from one to another of the visitors.

My aunt, to relieve the embarrassment of the situation, broke the silence by saying, in a low voice : "You see, Thomas, the gentlemen are here."

"Where?" said Thomas.

My uncle, with an exclamation of impatience, jumped from his chair, hurried to the door, and, grasping the unfortunate Thomas by the arm, pushed him into the hall, then closed the door and resumed his seat. A moment's silence ensued, but no comment was made, and the meeting proceeded.





CHAPTER XI

THE INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL QUESTION

Ezra.—The subject of discussion this evening is, “The Industrial and Social Question.” Mr. Moore is censor, and Mr. Valanti will be the first speaker.

Mr. Valanti.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : It seems to me that, in the title of the subject for the evening, the word “ industrial ” is properly placed before the word “ social,” for it is evident that industry precedes social organisation, and governs it.

Social development is largely governed by industrial development. Make it possible for the Patagonians or Laplanders to construct and operate modern textile looms, to produce high grade merchantable iron and glassware, printing, art goods in general demand, and agricultural machinery, and you at once and radically change their social condition. Or, reverse the case : take away the above-mentioned industries from Western and Central Europe and from the United States, and then the social links weaken at once, and the body-politic sinks to a lower level.

In this connection it is interesting to note the rapid rise of England, and the corresponding decline of the Orient. Before the general introduction of

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manufactures into England, that country had but a faint voice in the affairs of nations, her social status was low, and her form feebly cohesive. At that time, however, and even long before that time, the Orient had a much higher, firmer and sounder social development. Nor could even the destructive wars prior to, during and at the time of the Roman Empire, shake the Orient from its then pre-eminent position.

The cause of the destruction of Oriental supremacy was the establishment of manufactures in England, in a form so radically different from that which had hitherto prevailed as almost to preclude competition. The efficiency of machinery and steam swept aside cheap hand labour. As a result, the English factory hand, at a wage rate ten times higher than that of his fellow in India or Turkey, could nevertheless, with artificial aid in the form of machinery operated by steam, produce at a much lower rate than could the cheap, patient hand-worker of the Orient. To this cause may be attributed the decline of the East and the rise of the West.

If this be true, as it certainly is, we may safely come to the conclusion that the high social status of England is due to the development of her manufacturing industries. And this is equally true of the United States ; for nowhere else than in England and the United States is there to be found so high a development of the manufacturing industries, and nowhere else is the social status so high.

That the social status is higher in this country than elsewhere is true ; that it is as high as we would like to have it is not true. While, on the one hand, we see an unprecedented development which in a few years has converted a wilderness into the abiding-place of one of

the grandest nations of the world; we see, on the other hand, that within the borders of this country there is still a large measure of grinding poverty and consequent misery. It therefore follows that the primary aim of this people should be to aid the development of the manufacturing industries, and thereby to raise still higher the social status of the people of the United States.

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Bradley.

Mr. Bradley.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: There is a measure of truth in the remarks of the last speaker, but it is not evident from the facts that his diagnosis is correct, so far as this country is concerned. The importance of the manufacturing industries, as factors in the development of England, may be readily granted; but the facts do not show that these same factors were equally potent in the upbuilding of the United States. On the contrary, instead of the manufacturing industries constituting a factor in upbuilding, they were themselves built up at the expense of another industry. Manufactures were built up under subsidies and bounties, and these bounties, in the form of the protective tariff, came, and still come, as a tax upon the staples of agriculture.

If, therefore, we desire to discover the real factor in the industrial development of the United States, we must centre our attention on the agricultural industry.

It is a fact that the United States stands without a precedent in the rapidity and degree of its development, and this is due in the main to the operation of a well-defined economic law. Land, fertile land, was rated in Western or Central Europe at a valuation of about two hundred dollars an acre. Rent on these lands, at six per cent., is equal to twelve dollars an acre per year.

The German, French, or English farmer, paying this rent, was compelled to compete with the American farmer who had obtained his land for one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre. Interest on one dollar and twenty-five cents at six per cent. is about seven cents a year. In other words, the farmers of Western or Central Europe, paying twelve dollars rent a year, were compelled to compete with the American farmer, whose interest cost was only seven cents a year.

It was twelve dollars against seven cents. Is not this a sufficient cause for the rapid development of the United States? Does not this remarkable difference clearly show the cause of the great prosperity and rapid development of this nation?

It will thus be seen that the present high social status in this country is primarily due to agriculture, and indirectly only to manufacture. The promotion of the agricultural industry is, therefore, in direct line with the advancement of the social status of the people.

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Quail.

Mr. Quail.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: The last speaker seemed to me to be correct in his high estimate of agriculture as the principal factor in our rapid development, and I agree that our best interests will be conserved by the further development of this all-important industry.

There is an additional element, however, not yet mentioned, which is worthy of our attention. I refer to the ownership of land by the many, in individual holdings of small amount. This seems to me a factor powerfully affecting the social status of a people.

In ancient times, title to most land was usually vested in the king or nobles. A notable variation from this rule was in the land of Israel, where the tenure was in

the head of the family, and where the title was inalienable. And it was largely this latter system of land tenure, in my opinion, which made it possible for the ancient Hebrews to produce their grand religious system, the foundation of Christianity and of Mohammedanism.

Modern revolutions in Europe, it is true, have likewise tended to distribute land into the private ownership of the many ; and such ownership has so far tended to promote free government and a higher social status. But inasmuch as the ownership of land in small holdings was begun in this country at an earlier time, and on a much larger scale, than elsewhere, it follows that this country presents a much higher social status than any other.

A conclusion which must necessarily follow is this : We should continue in the course which we have thus far pursued ; so we may hope to reach that higher social plane where are embodied our ideals.

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : Without the slightest intention to be personal, I wish to observe that this meeting seems to me the most ludicrous that I recall.

Here we are, an organisation of working men, discussing the industrial and social question, and three out of six have already spoken. I do not know what will be said by those who follow me, but I know this much of what has been said—that it reflects no credit on this organisation as a pathfinder for labour.

The first speaker spoke of manufactures, but did he say anything about labour or labourers ? If so, I have forgotten it, and I ask you to remind me. Did he say a word about the wage rate, and about the rights and

wrongs of labour? If so, I have forgotten it, and I ask you to remind me.

As for the other two speakers, were I not acquainted with them, did I not know them to be wage workers, I should take them for politicians talking at a country fair to an audience of farmers. In what they said there was not even an indirect mention of labour. That theme was as effectually tabooed as if the discussion had been between retired merchant princes.

These two speakers seemed to play gentleman and scholar. But we are here this evening to discuss the industrial and social question, and we should stick to the text. This I shall try to do, so far as I am able; and, in doing so, I will divide the heading, and speak first on the industrial question.

By industry we mean toil,—labour. This, I take it, is the common lot of man. Every man that toils, producing, is entitled to compensation in exact proportion to the value of his labour. He is entitled to this compensation; it belongs to him and to no one else. He is entitled to just and equal compensation for any benefit he confers upon others by his skill and by his effort. He is entitled to a like recompense of skill and effort in return. That is justice, that is equity, that is free and unimpeded competition.

But tell me, can anyone here truthfully say that skill and toil are thus paid? Can anyone be blind to the intricate combination of filters which diminish the rightful earnings of skill and toil? Are there not ten thousand devices in operation, cunningly planned to rob labour of its just reward? What need to go into the details of this stupendous robbery when they are so patent always on every hand?

To call this a robbery of money is to put it in the

mildest possible form. Is there not something that we value even more highly than money, and is that not liberty?

Yet money and liberty are largely equal and synonymous terms. You have a day off from work, and it is equal to a day of liberty. If our skill and labour are unjustly taxed to such a degree that we receive twenty days' pay for thirty days' labour, are we not thereby robbed of ten days' freedom? Do we not thereby suffer slavery in addition to robbery? And yet really free and open competition would not enslave or rob us; for under it the higher skill, the greater service, would receive the larger compensation.

But do skill and service receive such compensation? Take the women, for instance, who are employed in the retail stores and in the offices, at half or one third the wages of the men whom they replace. Do they receive just compensation for their skill and for their toil? Let the employers answer!

Take the protective tariff. That averages about fifty per cent., and, by the profits of the middlemen, is swelled to nearly eighty per cent. What share of this national bounty goes to the workingmen? What but the burden of the tax?

What about the trusts and combinations? Are their methods free and open competition?

Begin from the beginning, and go through the entire industrial system as it is, and you will find it a system of evasion, a scientific system of how not to be just, how not to be equitable. That employer is most prosperous under our present system who can most scientifically conceal these unjust discriminating evasions. And what are these evasions but schemes for depriving man of his inalienable right, his liberty?

If then the competitive system is so full of deadly flaws,—flaws which cannot be patched or mended,—is it not well to look to another and more satisfactory system? Surely; and that more satisfactory system is collectivism. Collectivism, or, as it is more generally denominated, socialism, will give to each man, woman and child what the present system will not or cannot give. It will give to each his or her proper due.

It is fashionable at this period in the history of the world for all who follow the tide to turn their backs on collectivism. Nor is this all; they do more besides. Vilification and detraction are used as the hammer and tongs with which to twist and misshape this idea. And woe to the scholar, the economist, or the writer, who is bold enough even to mention socialism in a serious, earnest way! He is at once pounced upon as were the teachers of old, who, perceiving the light, dared to show it. The rack, the gibbet, the dungeon, would, no doubt, be the penalty for teaching collectivism to-day, if it were not for that broader toleration which prohibits any such repressive measures,—that broader toleration purchased for mankind by the suffering and martyrdom of the noblest and grandest among men.

Is this attempt at repression of the truths of socialism a wise course? If the idea is not permitted that more extended development which the strength of a united inquiry would give it, is it not likely to generate such a series of mischiefs as is brought about by any partially developed truth struggling for acceptance? What do our adversaries fear? If socialism is wrong, illogical, untenable, cannot that be more clearly demonstrated by dispassionate, sober reasoning than by intemperate vituperation?

Are not our opponents men? So are the advocates

of socialism ; yet the former would make us out devils whose desire is to uproot and to destroy.

Socialism does, of a truth, aim to uproot and to destroy ; but to uproot and destroy what ? What except that inhuman slavery, that base injustice in the social relation between man and man, which, so long as it exists, keeps the human race down to the cruel and selfish level of wild beasts ?

The hand of the Ishmaelite was said to have been raised against his every fellow-man ; but does not our present social system make Ishmaelites of us all ? Aye, and worse. It binds mankind in the bonds of cruelty and wrong, making of the whole earth a Sodom and a Gomorrah ; turning over the rule of the world into the hands of an omnipotent devil.

The time for a reckoning has come ; the messenger is knocking at the outer gate. Can we who have eyes fail to see ; we who have ears fail to hear ? Is not all Europe an armed camp ? Behold, when the signal shall be given, when the trumpets shall call the millions, the robbed millions, the despoiled millions, the enslaved millions, will they not arise ? And will they not then brush aside wrong and cruelty as a strong man brushes aside a fly ?

What is to be done in Europe will be done here, and in every part of the habitable globe. It therefore behooves all free-minded, all justice-loving men and women everywhere, to do all in their power to hasten that day, and thus to perform their share in this noble work. Such measures, such alone, will forever settle The Industrial and The Social Question.



CHAPTER XII

THE INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL QUESTION — *Continued*

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Moore, the censor of the evening.

Mr. Moore.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : Before beginning I would request that the Secretary read the introductory remarks of the censor of the previous debate, as I am in full accord with what he said, and do not believe I can improve on it.

Ezra.—The secretary will please read.

The secretary then read the following : “ The office of censor is a most difficult and exacting one. It should be the province of the censor, as I understand it, to analyse all seeming truths, and to show wherein, if at all, they are errors. Politeness and courtesy must not interfere with his plain duty. His is the surgeon’s art, not that of the soothing midwife. Bringing forth nothing, nor aiding to bring forth, he must pitilessly cut away whatever is foreign to the healthy body. He must be no respecter of persons. Falsehood he must hunt to earth, with the scent of the hound ; the truth he may pass by with silent assent. His main concern is to strike down whatever, in the guise of truth, is, in his opinion, falsehood.”

Mr. Moore.—Borrowing, as an introduction, what was just read, I will now proceed.

The first speaker seems to have twisted the facts somewhat in crediting the Orient with a social status pre-eminent above that of the Occident. It cannot be shown that at any time in the history of the world, whether prior to, during or after the Roman Empire, did the Oriental people attain that degree of individual freedom which has always been the characteristic feature of the Occident. The Orientals were slavish races from the beginning of history, and they are as slavish to-day. The Occidentals were free from the beginning of the historic period, as far as we can know, and they are free to-day.

Yet the Oriental has always been a patient toiler, ever busy, ever at work, in the past as now. And this fact proves that industrial activity, in itself, is not nearly the factor in social development that the speaker would have us believe. Therefore his conclusions are, on this point, valueless.

The third speaker argues that a higher social status was achieved in this country through the multiplication of farmers who owned their farms.

I fail to see here the cause of our social uplifting. There is, in my opinion, little difference, as factors in development, between the land-owning farmer and the farmer who rents his land. Both are conservatives, and are such from one and the same cause. They live in partial isolation, and exert only a feeble and indirect influence in the changes brought about through human agency. Take the farmer now, as in the past, whether owner or renter, and you find him always slow, plodding and conservative; the last to change the fashion of his dress, the mode of his

speech, or the tenor of his religious belief. This is what, in a measure, has caused his former usual designations of pagan, heathen, and villain to stand in our day for something degraded and low.

Political panderers are indeed wont to invest these farmers with sundry ideal virtues. They mouth much about the honest farmers, nor does the boorish element squirm when called by these interested flatterers "nature's noblemen." "Nature's" indeed, for art has had very little to do with their fashioning; but "noblemen" when? Honest the farmer may be willing to be, but that does not deter him from putting the small apples in the centre of the barrel, or from driving a one-sided bargain at a horse deal. He clamours against dishonesty, but he means the dishonesty of those who are more skilful in its practice than he. And as employer, Heaven defend us! It is only in the last straits, when all other avenues of employment are closed, that a wage earner will go to a farmer for labour. The farmer lengthens out the days of toil by working in the two ends of darkness, early morning and late evening. Take him all in all, whether as renter or as owner, the farmer is least of all a beneficent factor in social advancement. And if this is true, it nullifies the conclusions not only of the second speaker, but of the third speaker as well.

Let us now review the remarks of the fourth speaker, who, it seems to me, committed a breach of courtesy toward prior speakers by his use of vehement rebuttal. Pointed rebuttal, by our rule, may be used only by censor, unless we waive the order of the evening and enter into debate.

As to the matter of his statement, it is remarkable only as showing that a man of ordinary intelligence can

work himself up to such a pitch of frenzy that vehemence and words usurp the place of reason.

We all know that at divers times and places some individual becomes surcharged with an idea which he believes to be the truth. Forthwith he assumes the office of teacher and propagandist. Restraint is thrown to the winds, and all who come to refute are denounced in terms of bitter enmity. He goes forth to conquer the world, gathers disciples, and founds a school. Each disciple now becomes the centre of a group of other disciples, and these larger and smaller groups imagine that they, together, constitute the world, and that whatever is not part of them is enmity and devil.

What else than hallucination can we call this? Here we have been told that Europe is slumbering in the shadow of a social volcano kept inactive by the weight of a great standing army, and that an eruption, should it take place, would brush aside this great standing army as a strong man brushes away a fly. Why is not this easy brushing aside done now and for good? Why do the millions hesitate? Is it not because they are not co-believers in socialism as a means of removing oppression?

Here in the United States, for instance, out of about fifteen million voters, are not over fourteen millions wage earners? These wage earners have it in their power to change completely and radically the laws and the constitution of this nation,—not by armed force, but by the mere use of the ballot. Yet we find but a very small vote cast representative of the ideas propounded by the speaker. Shall we say that the people's inaction is due to ignorance or lack of public spirit? If such is the cause here, in the most enlightened country in the world, how much greater must be the

checks to action in other and less intelligent countries ! Is not the truth this,—that socialism is rejected by the intelligence of the people because it is believed to be an impracticable and impossible Utopia ?

Trial upon trial has been made to prove collectivism, socialism, practicable ; and we have yet to learn of the lasting success of a single trial. Argument may be piled upon argument and heaped in formidable relief ; yet the intelligence of the people clearly perceives that behind socialism lie the menace and the danger of new masters, the new bosses which such a system would evolve, more to be dreaded than all the Pharaohs or Czars that ever lived. To be subject to a political despot is a misfortune ; to be subject to a tyrannical task-master is also a misfortune ; but Heaven preserve us from the rule of a cruel tyrant who shall have political and industrial control combined in himself !

Socialists point to the labour performed under direction of the Federal Government as evidence of the efficacy of collective control. They point to the Post-Office, the Custom House, and the various government departments, as showing how efficient such direction can be made under a collective system. But are not the hundreds of cities standing evidences that public control is but another name for private corruption and concealed villainy ? In the cities it requires no microscopes to detect the corruption and inefficiency which now and then crop to the surface, and stand out in such bold relief.

The weakness inherent in human nature is too deeply rooted to be overcome at once through collectivism. It has taken many centuries for the world to struggle to its present comparatively high social position, and it may take many more centuries before it can climb a

notch or two higher. We cannot force progress faster than it is willing to travel. Thus we must admit that the conclusions of the fourth speaker are also untenable.

Ezra.—The evening has now advanced, and it seems to me that we should postpone further remarks either until to-morrow evening, or until the next regular meeting.

My uncle bent over and whispered to me, "Ask them for to-morrow night."

My aunt looked toward me, and nodded approval of the request. I therefore rose and said, "Mr. President and Gentlemen: I ask as a favour that you continue your discussion here to-morrow evening."

My uncle rose. "Gentlemen," said he, "I am under obligations to you for the very interesting way in which you have treated your subject; and for Mrs. Morton and myself, I join in my nephew's request that you meet here to-morrow."

Dorothy got up from her chair. "I hope you will all come," she said, and then sat down, blushing.

Mr. Quail accordingly moved that discussion be postponed until the following evening, at the same place. The motion was carried, the meeting adjourned, and the members, after a little conversation with us, took their leave.

"Be sure and come to-morrow night," were the last words of Mrs. Morton to Miss Selner, as her brother led her into the hall.

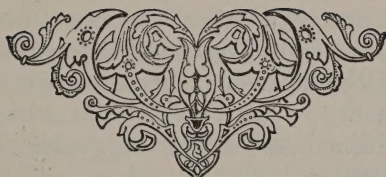
The hour was late, and we all rose to leave the library.

"Rather an interesting evening," said my uncle, reflectively. "I shall think over what they said. Perhaps I can form a clearer idea after to-morrow night. And now that I have seen the men, Joseph, I am inclined to admit that your estimate of them was fairer

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than mine. They do not seem the professional agitators I took them for."

This admission on my uncle's part was more than I had expected, and I was on the point of saying so. But, perceiving a suspicion of a smile on my aunt's face, I refrained, and said good-night instead, and our first evening of hospitality to the workingmen's club was concluded.





CHAPTER XIII

SECOND SUMMARY BY EZRA

THE following night found the same company assembled.

Report of an adjourned meeting of The Twentieth Century Club, held in the library of the residence of Mr. Morton, 7.45 P.M., Thursday, February 16, 1899.

Ezra.—This is a postponed meeting of the club. It is now in order to continue the discussion of "The Industrial and Social Question."

Mr. Valanti.—Mr. President: I suggest that you call on some of the non-members present for remarks on the subject.

The president acted on the suggestion, but all declined with thanks.

Ezra.—I fear that I shall not be able to do justice to the closing remarks, for it requires a greater ability than mine to generalise and summarise properly the able presentations of the members who have spoken. However, I will try to do my best.

Upon the importance of the subject we are all agreed. In fact we may safely assert that this most important question concerns not only the happiness, but the very existence, of the human race in a state of civilisation.

Our censor was too sweeping in his criticism of the farmers, as is indicated by a resolution which I will read. It is as follows :

“WHEREAS, The morning papers inform us that at Brockton a number of workingmen, amounting to five thousand, have been turned out of employment by an organisation called the ‘Manufacturers’ Association,’ because they belong to an organisation called the ‘Knights of Labor,’—this being their offence, and nothing more, — therefore be it

“*Resolved*, That we, the Patrons of Husbandry, in the National Grange assembled, do hereby send greeting and sympathy to our labouring brethren, and assure them that we will ever maintain the right and privilege of any person or class of our fellow citizens to organise themselves for protection.

“*Resolved*, That the Secretary, under seal of the National Grange, send a copy of the above to the Secretary of the Knights of Labor.

“JOHN TRIMBLE,

“Secretary National Grange, P. of H.

“November 18, 1885.”

This resolution speaks for itself and requires no comment. As to the statement of the first speaker; it may be safely admitted that a transfer of the English manufacturing plants into Turkey, and a further transfer of the Turkish industrial system into England, would at the present time produce a radical change in the economic and social conditions of both countries.

But it may be said that such a transfer is impossible ; for each of the countries named has that industrial system which its genius permits. This, however, by no means settles the question ; it merely, in a round-about way, tells us that England employs machinery and steam, and Turkey does not, and that England does this because the genius of her people has brought it about, while in Turkey no such genius exists.

Assuming for a moment that such is the case, the question still remains, whence did the English people derive their genius?

That this question is a pertinent one may be perceived from the fact that England was among the last of the historic countries of Europe to enter into the field of development. At the time of William the Conqueror, England certainly had no industrial system superior to that which existed in Asia Minor. We may assert, without fear of contradiction, that at that time Asia Minor had a much more highly developed industrial system, and consequently a higher social status. Whence, therefore, came this genius, this higher development of England?

To say that it came through the inventions of Watt and Arkwright and Stephenson, through Newton and Davey, is again to ask, whence came the genius of these men? And the further question arises, —since Turkey had a higher development at the time we speak of, why did she not produce men of genius of the same order as those of England?

These questions are more important than they appear on the surface, and should not go unanswered. In my opinion the answer is this: The English people had for guidance a central theme which was in greater harmony with universal law than was the central theme of the Turks.

To illustrate: A house can, no doubt, be built without the use of the square, the compass, the plumb, and the level, but it cannot be built so quickly or so truly as with these aids. A cathedral or a palace could never be built without them. Now what are these things? Are they not material embodiments of universal law? They certainly are. If, then, they can

best build houses who conform to universal law, is it not equally necessary to adhere to universal law in the upbuilding of the social structure? Surely.

If now the English understood better the relation of universal law, and applied that knowledge, and if the Turks neither understood nor applied, have we not herein a key to the solution of this question? I think we have. I think we may safely conclude that for guidance in the higher development of industrial and social systems, it is necessary to conform as strictly as possible to universal law. And if so, must not universal law become our standard, our central theme, our criterion, our rule to go by?

So long as we lack this criterion, we are like a ship at sea, without rudder or compass. Having this, we can sail on our true course. But whether our progress shall then be in harmony and concomitant with the law of least resistance depends upon the quality of our perception of universal law. The more nearly perfect our perception, the more truly will our criterion harmonise with universal law.

If what has been said be true, it would indicate that the English people approached nearer the true apprehension of universal law, than did the Turks. But inasmuch as the standard of England and this country is not yet up to the level of our highest ideal, and inasmuch as many and grievous imperfections in our present system present themselves ever before us, it follows that our system, while superior to the Turkish, is by no means as high as we should like it.

It must then follow that our perception of the true criterion, the true standard, is defective; not so defective as that of the Turks, but still defective. In other words, it is high relatively, and low absolutely.

It must again follow that we may gain our most important advantage only by discovering the cause of our defect, and by overcoming it.

What is and what should be our standard, our criterion, is, therefore, a most important question ; one on which we may with profit expend whatever mental and intellectual power we may possess. We may rest assured that those who shall succeed in bringing us a point higher in our knowledge on this subject will render us the most valuable of services.

And now I wish to make a few comments on the statements of the fourth speaker, and on the criticisms of the censor of the evening.

That there are many and grievous evils under the competitive system no one here will or can deny ; though whether collectivism, or socialism, would remove these evils and put no others, equally objectionable, in their place, I am now unable to say.

I think it absurd for any advocate of socialism to affirm that there are men who, while believing all that is said in favour of it, yet reject it. Such men, rich or poor, would be devils in human form, pure and simple. For what has the rich man but limited liberty, food, clothes and lodging, and much care and anxiety besides ? If now socialism would give him all this, and remove his care and anxiety, would he be mad enough to reject it ?

It is the fear of jeopardising present good, and the further fear of bringing about unknown and greater evils, which prompt the rejection of this proposed system. But, on the other hand, to refuse this proposition a respectful hearing, and to denounce its advocates as enemies, knaves, or fools, is as short-sighted as it would be to assent to it before judgment had pronounced in its favour.

Nor can all the existing forms of socialism be called failures. Municipal ownership of water, light, toll, and limited franchise rights have proved a benefit, and are mainly the result of socialistic effort. Streets, rivers, roads and parks are in fact manifest evidences of the utility and benefit of collective ownership. It may be that in time new developments of socialism will more clearly indicate its practicability. But there is one point which this evening I want to emphasise most of all, and it is this : We should treat with much more respect and consideration than in the past such men as come to us questioning, and such others as come earnestly asserting.

If there is a gauge, a measure, to determine the real relative degree of a civilisation, it is the kind of treatment accorded to such men. How evident is this fact, which we may, if we wish, gather from almost every page of history ! In the past, mankind has given the primary honours to secondary persons ; the commentators, sleek and fat, clothed in costly robes, were crowned with wreaths and garlands. But the first seer, the original promulgator, the primary agitator, the propagandist,—what of him ? Alas, to him were given garments of humiliation, a garland of scorn and a crown of thorns.

Was not this the embodiment of savage cruelty ? Was it not as cruel, savage and debasing as the practices of uncivilised Indians ? It was this treatment of the seer and prophet which retarded the progress of the world. And if the world was in turn made to suffer for her cruelty, her suffering was less than that of the seer and prophet, for she was then uncouth in mind, and too coarse even to comprehend that she was suffering. To-day the situation has entirely changed. Let there

be but a slight jar in existing conditions to-day, and a change-effecting wave at once arises and rolls onward in its determinate course of good or evil.

Can we not see that forces are now at work, which, gathering strength as time goes on, are destined to set in motion change-effecting waves of wonderful potency; waves by which the world will be more powerfully influenced than at any prior time in history?

Among these forces which are to transform the political, social and economic conditions of the world, there is none more full of potent import than is the transference of Occidental means and methods of production into the Orient.

Agricultural machinery, cotton looms, locomotives, printing presses,—all these, and thousands of other and similarly significant objects, are now being introduced into the Orient, and already we can see the beginning of the gathering of the potent change-effecting waves.

The second speaker drew our attention to the fact that the rapid development of the United States was due to the great difference in the cost of land. He asserted that land in Western and Central Europe, which brought a rental of twelve dollars a year per acre, could have been bought outright in the United States for one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre; but this condition is being rapidly changed. While our lands have been going up, on the one hand, European capitalists have been obtaining vast tracts of land in various parts of the world, and the greater portion at even a less rate than that originally paid in the United States. As a result, the world's price of agricultural staples is no longer governed so much by what we produce in this country, but is now being largely

influenced by the productions of our new competitors in the cheapest land and labour countries of the world.

Agricultural machinery on the cheap lands, in the hands of the world's cheapest labour, has already changed the world's price-fixing base, and has thus lowered the world prices for the staples of agriculture. It has already and forever taken from this country the partial monopoly of price-fixing for these products, and has transferred this privilege to land and labour of other and alien countries and races.

The steady and rapid multiplication of cotton looms in Japan, and the beginning of the factory system there, are already in evidence in the importation into this country and into Europe of the products of this new and undreamed-of evolution.

In agriculture we already feel the effects of the submerging of this strange change-effecting wave, for the lowering of the world's price of agricultural staples has correspondingly lowered the home price of these products, thus materially diminishing the purchasing power of the primary industry. The condition of this industry must, in turn, adversely affect all the other industries of this nation.

If this mere beginning has had the effect of thus influencing our economic condition, what greater change must not be produced when the factory system, with modern machinery, with steam and electricity, shall have been firmly established, not only in Japan, but likewise in China and India !

In view of this chain of changes, who can say what modifications, in the near future, may not be necessary in order to adjust the economic and social conditions of this nation ? Nor may these changes be warded off by the clumsy device of a protective tariff, for the day of

restrictions and exclusions is almost at an end. The clamour for equity will, in the end, throw open wide the door, and commercial advantages, free as water, will find a common level.

In sight of this mighty flood of power, now shaping itself and gathering strength, shall we stand idly by with folded hands and inactive brains? Shall we not at least give these earnest men a respectful hearing when they come appealingly, offering us what they believe to be a solution to the problem of general amelioration? Is it not possible, after all, that these very men, these very socialists, are the seers and prophets of this age and for the whole world?

Who else is entitled to answer in the negative except those who can refute them, or who can point to a better or more equitable method?





CHAPTER XIV

A CONFESSION OF PREJUDICE

Mr. Bradley.—Mr. President : I suggest that you call upon the non-members for remarks.

Ezra.—The non-members are called upon for remarks.

Mr. Morton.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : I esteem the presence of this club here a fortunate event, an event which shall mark a most important change in my habit of thought. I do not hesitate to say that previous to this experience I had other and radically different opinions on the subjects discussed, and that those opinions have now been modified. For these modifications, I am indebted to you.

Nor is this all. They say that frank confession is good for the soul, and I deem it proper now and here to make such a confession. It concerns you and it concerns me. I see the stenographer taking down what I say, and I realise that what I say will thus be made public. Yet this shall in no wise deter me from performing what I believe to be a duty.

The greater portion of my life has been spent in social contact with the rich. In common with those who, like me, narrow their sphere of association, I acquired an imperfect mode of thought, calculated to

generate prejudices. I can now perceive my mistake, and I realise its danger.

There was a time in the history of the world when there may have been a necessity for an exclusive and patrician class. That time has, thank God, passed. The time has now come when the needs of progress and of higher civilisation demand the social communion and co-operation of all the intelligent minds among us.

I begin to realise that wealth by no means possesses a monopoly of intelligence ; for were it so, the twenty-five thousand regulars in the United States army would scarce be sufficient to keep in order a single state ; instead of serving, as they do, to preserve the peace of nearly eighty million people.

If we have succeeded, by the labours of the past, in evolving that high degree of progress to which we have attained, how much higher, grander and nobler will our achievements be if we but do away with prejudices, and all unite in one mighty effort toward still higher development ! Therefore, from now on, I purpose to set aside the prejudices which a narrow field of observation engendered, and shall endeavour to exert any influence of mine in the direction I have indicated.

I repeat that I now perceive the error of my former opinions. I can give your earnest, thoughtful behaviour no higher, grander name than Americanism, pure and simple ; and I am sure, from what I have heard, that you would value that designation more highly than any other.

But I have made only one part of my confession. The other part is even more humiliating to my sense of true discernment ; but a sense of duty prompts me to make it, and thus to rid my mind of the injustice which it harboured.

I had always thought of a socialist as a beer-drinking German loafer ; a Jew as a grasping, scheming and unscrupulous money-shark ; the Italian I had believed to be degraded, vicious and treacherous ; the negro the embodiment of ignorance and superstition ; while those of Irish blood I had taken to be seditious, place-seeking and peace-destroying.

I now realise how much in error I have been, and I shall do all I can to correct my mistake. In conclusion, I wish to say that my wife and I — and I believe I say it with her approval, for I see, as you all do, her manifestation of that approval — I therefore repeat, that my wife and I will always deem it a privilege to have you hold any future meetings at our house, and we shall be glad to receive an invitation to your meetings wherever they may be held.

Mr. Joseph Morton. — Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : I do not know that I can find words more apt to express what I have to say than those just uttered by my uncle. I therefore wish it understood that what he has said applies equally to me. I make the same admissions, and I share his hope for the good to be accomplished through the co-operation and social communion of all the intelligent minds among us, regardless of difference in wealth, creed or colour. Let us hope that the time will soon be here when such differences will no longer raise an artificial wall of separation. I believe, with Mr. Morton, that the social communion of intelligent minds among all the people must tend, in a great degree, to eliminate prejudice.

Mr. Quail. — Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : I have no doubt that what has just been said by the non-members is as pleasing to the remainder of our club as it is to me. I do not, for one moment, attribute

those remarks to any personal merit on our part ; nor do I regard them as an outburst of mere emotional sentiment, such as we so frequently see in the oratorical efforts of political leaders. No, we all realise the hollowness and pretence of much that is said by the interested orator. Here there was no such pretence ; here we can discover no concealed motive. The feeling which prompted the words seemed to come straight from the heart, and for that reason should be highly valued, not only by us, but by all Americans. Nay, more, such a feeling should have value for people of other lands ; lands which have not yet achieved our high standard of freedom.

I believe, for my part, that what we have just heard expressed by the last two speakers is an earnest and an evidence of that higher development, — that higher humanity, — which is to be evolved in the Twentieth Century to a still greater degree than in any preceding century in the history of civilisation.

Mr. Fisher. — Mr. President and Members of the Club : In view of what has been said on the subject before us, and as the next link in the chain of our inquiry, I move that the subject for our next debate be “ Collectivism and Competition Compared,” and that Mr. Bradley be the censor of the evening.

The motion, having been seconded, and amended by the nomination of Mr. Quail as first speaker, was carried.

The meeting then adjourned.



CHAPTER XV

FROM A BUSINESS POINT OF VIEW

THE following morning brought a message from my physician : " Schubert is out of danger. Shall I put him in the pay ward ? "

" Yes," I answered, " do all you can toward his recovery, and send me the bill."

Luncheon of that day afforded the first opportunity since the meeting for our little family to be together. And when my uncle appeared his face bore an expression which brought a question from my aunt : " Well, Henry, what is the trouble ? "

" Only that I made a fool of myself last night."

" How ? "

" Oh, in saying a lot of rubbish to the men at the meeting."

" Why, Henry ! " exclaimed my aunt. " And you were so serious, too ! I supposed of course you meant it."

" So I did last night ; but now that I have thought it over, I believe I made a fool of myself. You see," he continued, " I have just come from my real estate agent's, and there he told me of his experience with Joseph and the tenant Schubert. He says he has

already had several tenants at his office with long faces and giving various excuses why they will not be able to pay their rent. He sent them all out 'right about face,' 'flying,' as he expressed it. Some of the tenants asked for Joseph's address, but he sent them about their business in short order.

"The real estate man gave me plainly to understand, Joseph, that if there was to be any more of this kind of interference on your part, he would have to refuse your account. What would you do then? Would you try someone else? Could you improve matters in that way? This firm is the most capable and the most trustworthy in the city, and manages to average from ten to twenty-five per cent. net more than the others I have tried. You really ought to be careful, Joseph. I do wish you would go out into the world and get some business experience; for unless you do, I am afraid that what you have will melt away like wax before the fire.

"Let me tell you," he continued, "that in my younger days I had my own periods of high-mindedness and highfalutin ideas; but cool calculation and some hard, sharp and costly experiences soon taught me to draw the line tight. I will just relate one or two instances for your benefit.

"At one time, when your father and I were struggling on our way upward, but had not succeeded in realising any of our social ambitions, we were agreeably surprised to receive from a merchant whose social position we knew to be excellent an invitation to a reception. We both attended, and were cordially received. A short time thereafter the merchant called upon us; and, after some polite circumlocution, he asked for and walked away with our check for what

was then, to us, a considerable amount. This was in the form of a loan, to be returned in a short time. It was never returned and was never meant to be. Other experiences in the same line followed, until one fine day we both concluded to put up the iron shutter on this species of benevolence.

"Next we tried to do something for our employés, and found that we might as well have poured our money into an open sink. What was granted to one, as an act of benevolence, was soon expected and indirectly demanded, as a right, by all. Then came the third and last stage, the most difficult of all to abandon. Friends, and pretended friends, borrowed sums varying from five cents up to thousands of dollars; but the amount returned was so trifling that it can be said to have been nothing.

"About fifteen years ago I became deeply interested in a question of political policy, and issued a number of pamphlets thereon. Champions arose who took up my side, but almost all in the end tapped me for loans. At length I concluded that I had had enough of all this, so I suddenly shut down for good on the whole tribe of borrowers. And now, whenever I feel that I must be benevolent, I send whatever I see fit to the officers of organised charity, and end it all there."

"But, Uncle," protested Dorothy, "is not that too severe? If you were made to suffer through the acts of unscrupulous people, is that any reason why the really needy should not be assisted?"

"The really needy are so numerous," replied my uncle, "that there is not money enough or charity enough in the whole world to assist them even for one day. Simply to aid the most persistent beggars is to multiply mendicancy. Were I a poor man, I would

sooner die than receive charity. Why should I help to encourage what I believe to be a vice?"

"But in the case of the Schuberts," said Dorothy; "were not young children the principal sufferers?"

"Then," said my uncle, "the organised charities would have taken care of them."

"Still, this Schubert family had been tenants of Joseph's for some time, and he had profited by their rent. Was it not his special duty to assist them?"

"From a purely benevolent point of view," said my uncle, "yes; from a business point of view, no."

"So charity and business are to be divorced from each other."

"Most certainly."

"Then what becomes of practical Christianity?"

"There is no such thing as practical Christianity," replied my uncle. "The most that can be expected in ordinary life is theoretical Christianity. Practical Christianity would have us sell all and give to the poor; whereas practical business would have us sell at a profit in order to be able to buy more. Practical Christianity would have us turn the other cheek for repeated blows, but practical business seeks for every advantage."

"Oh, Mr. Morton," said Dorothy, half reprovingly, "do you know what I think?"

"What?"

"I will tell you. I don't believe you really mean a word you have said this morning. You are not in earnest. But I do believe that you were in earnest last night. It was your own dear self that spoke then. What you have said this morning is only the reflection of what that hard-hearted real estate man would have you say."

"If so," answered my uncle, smiling, "then the real estate agent is the better business man of the two."

"Then what difference is there," asked Dorothy, after a moment of reflection, "between the method of the savage hunter of times past and that of the business man of to-day?"

"Hardly any," replied my uncle. "Both are, equally, examples of eagerness for power and acquisition. The business man has about as much pity or consideration for his competitor as the savage had for his prey or for his antagonist."

"And it seems that the quantity of money a contestant possesses," I observed, "must add materially to his strength, and in fact determine it."

"Certainly," said my uncle. "A naturally weak man with plenty of money is very much stronger than a naturally strong man with little money."

"And is there anything to prevent the combination, in one fund, of the money of the many rich?"

"No, indeed. Such a combination is called a joint-stock company."

"The combination of wealth, then," I said, "makes wealth a more powerful factor, does it not?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Can it, when thus combined, buy cheaper?"

"Yes, and sell dearer."

"Does it not sell largely to the industrial classes?"

"Yes, for they form the bulk of the consumers."

"And what the industrial classes have for sale,—is that not limited to their labour?"

"Yes."

"Well, then," I concluded, "must it not follow that Fisher was right when he said, 'Can anyone be blind

to the intricate combination of filters which diminish the rightful earnings of skill and toil ? ”

“ What of that ? ” said my uncle. “ There is about as much sense in that complaint as if one stag were to complain of the superior horns of another stag.”

“ But stags, as a rule,” observed Aunt Barbara, “ do not employ their horns against one another, but for defence against a common enemy.”

“ And our common enemies,” my uncle replied, “ are they not our wants and our desires ? Do we not conquer them by satisfying them ? And do not our experiences teach us to employ all the resources at our command in acquiring the means of satisfaction ? ”

“ Are our actions governed by the same motives as those of wild animals ? ” asked my aunt.

“ In a measure, yes,” replied my uncle.

“ Then stags seem to be more humane than we.”

“ In the light in which you view it, yes. But perhaps,” my uncle added, “ stags do not use more force and cunning merely because they do not need to.”

“ And is this the end of civilisation ? ” asked Dorothy.

“ Whether this is to be the ultimate end,” Uncle Harry replied, “ I do not know ; but it is a stubborn fact that the objects and methods we have discussed are those of our day.”

“ If that is true,” said I, “ and if wealth gains additional strength through concentration, could not the industrial class likewise gain in strength through the concentration of numbers ? I mean, of course, if this were done on a very much larger scale than to-day. Would not this create that balance of power between capital and labour which would tend to promote equitable distribution ? ”

“ Such organisation of labour,” observed my uncle,

“ would become a standing menace to peace and progress. Labour is, on the whole, unreasoning and impulsive ; easily led on to overstep the bounds of law. If once it shall feel itself master of the situation, it will become a most unreasonable and tyrannical master. It will dictate the rate of wages, regardless of all law of competition ; it will compel the enforcement of many and obnoxious rules, prominent among which will, no doubt, be the prohibition of dismissal of an employé by the master or his agent. And as showing what such a condition of affairs would lead to, let me read you something that John Stuart Mill has said.”





CHAPTER XVI

WORKMAN AND MASTER

MY uncle rose, and led the way to the library, whither we all followed him. There, going to the bookcase, he took down a copy of Mill's *Political Economy*, and read, from page 445 : "To extract real work from day labourers, without the power of dismissal, is only practicable by the power of the lash."

"Yes, Uncle Harry," said I. "And now, if you please, let me quote something from the same book." So, taking the volume, and turning to page 144, I read:

"To civilise a savage, he must be inspired with new wants and desires, even if not of a very elevated kind, provided that their gratification can be a motive to steady and regular bodily and mental exertion."

Again, turning to page 457, I read :

"If the bulk of the human race are always to remain as at present,—slaves to toil in which they have no interest, and therefore feel no interest—drudging from early morning till late at night for bare necessities, and with all the intellectual and moral deficiencies which that implies—without resources either in mind or feelings—untaught, for they cannot be better taught than fed; selfish, for all their thoughts are required for themselves; without interest or sentiments as citizens and members

of society, and with a sense of injustice rankling in their minds, equally for what they have not, and for what others have ; I know not what there is which should make a person with any capacity of reason concern himself about the destinies of the human race. There would be no wisdom for any one but in extracting from life, with Epicurean indifference, as much personal satisfaction to himself and those with whom he sympathises, as it can yield without injury to any one, and letting the unmeaning bustle of so-called civilised existence roll by unheeded."

I handed the volume to my uncle. He took it, opened at page 458, and read :

"Poverty, like most social evils, exists because men follow their brute instincts without due consideration."

I again took the book, and read, from page 147 :

"A thing not yet so well understood and recognised, is the economical value of the general diffusion of intelligence among the people."

"That is true," said my uncle. "I am a strong believer in the public school, and in the general diffusion of knowledge among the people."

"But," I said, "Mr. Mill does not by any means limit his theory of education to the public school, for on page 145 he says :

"That the productiveness of the labour of a people is limited by their knowledge of the arts of life, is self-evident ; and that any progress in those arts, any improved application of the objects or powers of nature to industrial uses, enables the same quantity and intensity of labour to raise a greater produce.' "

"No one will deny that," observed my uncle.

"Will you likewise assent to this ?" I said, turning to page 155 :

"The efficiency of industry may be expected to be great, in proportion as the fruits of industry are insured to the person exerting it: and that all social arrangements are conducive to useful exertion, according as they provide that the reward of everyone for his labour shall be proportioned as much as possible to the benefit which it produces."

Seeing him hesitate, I put the question again, and he replied, "Yes; I know of no reason why I cannot agree to that."

"Then," said I, "permit me to make another quotation from the same page, and let me ask whether you agree with it:"

"All laws or usages which favour one class or sort of persons to the disadvantage of others; which chain up the efforts of any part of the community in pursuit of their own good, or stand between those efforts and their natural fruits — are (independently of all other grounds of condemnation) violations of the fundamental principles of economical policy; tending to make the aggregate productive powers of the community productive in a less degree than they would otherwise be."

"I really fail to see what you are driving at, Joseph," said my uncle. "It seems almost as though you had been playing a part these last few weeks. Perhaps we have all had our parts. Yours, of course, is that of hero, Dorothy may be the heroine, my wife a walking lady, while I am given the rôle of heavy villain. Your last quotation may be intended to illustrate the fact that I, the heavy villain, favour one class, the wicked rich, to the detriment of your (the hero's) class, the virtuous poor. Am I correct?"

"No, Henry," said my aunt. "You may remember that you began the argument. It was you that offered the first quotation from the book. And now that

Joseph seems to be getting the better of the discussion, is it fair for you to show anything like temper?"

"I hardly think I am showing temper," my uncle replied. "I am simply showing this young gentleman that things are so, because they are so, and that it is not incumbent upon him or me to move the universe; that universe-moving is the special business of the fool and the charlatan."

"Then were Jesus, Isaiah and Paul fools or charlatans?" my aunt asked.

"Oh no," answered my uncle, "they were religious teachers; there is nothing to be said against them. But economic reformers belong to a different class. A man, a community or a people may, without any serious difficulty, change their opinions in matters of faith; that is easy enough to bring about. But for a man, a community or a people to give up wealth, or to divide it with a lot of worthless, shiftless loafers,—that is another thing."

"But, Uncle Harry," I said, "who is advocating either course? Am I? Are you? It seems to me I have simply been asking for information; and, to my recollection, I have advocated nothing."

"Oh yes," replied my uncle. "You advocated holding the workingmen's meeting at my house."

"My dear," said my aunt, "you forget that it was Dorothy and I who advocated that, and that Joseph seemed to oppose it when it was proposed."

"Well, yes," he admitted; "since you remind me of it, I freely confess that I am wrong in blaming Joseph."

"And there is no use in losing one's temper in argument, is there?" continued my aunt, good-naturedly.

"I am not out of temper," replied my uncle, with an

effort at a smile. "Let Joseph continue, and no one here will find any cause to complain on that score."

"Very good, Uncle," I remarked. "And now let me remind you that I took up the study of economics at your earnest solicitation. There are still a few more authorities which, with your permission, I will submit for your consideration."

Taking down *The Wealth of Nations*, by Adam Smith, I read from pages 69, 70 and 71 :

"The workmen desire to get as much, the masters to give as little as possible. The former are disposed to combine in order to raise, the latter in order to lower the wages of labour.

"It is not, however, difficult to foresee which of the two parties must, upon all ordinary occasions, have the advantage in the dispute, and force the other into a compliance with their terms. The masters, being fewer in number, can combine much more easily ; and the law, besides, authorises, or at least does not prohibit their combinations, while it prohibits those of the workmen.

"In all such disputes the masters can hold out much longer. A landlord, a farmer, a master manufacturer, or merchant, though they did not employ a single workman, could generally live a year or two upon the stocks which they have already acquired. Many workmen could not subsist a week, few could subsist a month, and scarce any a year without employment. In the long run the workman may be as necessary to his master as his master is to him ; but the necessity is not so immediate.

"We rarely hear, it has been said, of the combinations of masters ; though frequently of those of workmen. But whoever imagines, upon this account, that masters rarely combine, is as ignorant of the world as of the subject. Masters are always and everywhere in a sort of tacit, but constant and uniform combination, not to raise the wages of labour above their actual rate. To violate this combination is everywhere a most unpopular action, and a sort of reproach to a master among his neighbours and equals. We seldom, indeed, hear of this

combination, because it is the usual, and one may say the natural, state of things which nobody ever hears of. Masters too sometimes enter into particular combinations to sink the wages of labour even below this rate. These are always conducted with the utmost silence and secrecy till the moment of execution, and when the workmen yield, as they sometimes do, without resistance, though severely felt by them, they are never heard of by other people.

“Such combinations, however, are frequently resisted by a contrary defensive combination of the workmen; who sometimes, too, without any provocation of this kind, combine of their own accord to raise the price of their labour. Their usual pretences are, sometimes the high price of provisions; sometimes the great profit which their masters make by their work.

“But whether their combinations be offensive or defensive, they are always abundantly heard of. In order to bring the point to a speedy decision, they have always recourse to the loudest clamour, and sometimes to the most shocking violence and outrage. They are desperate, and act with the folly and extravagance of desperate men, who must either starve or frighten their masters into an immediate compliance with their demands.

“The masters upon these occasions are just as clamorous upon the other side, and never cease to call aloud for the assistance of the civil magistrate, and the rigorous execution of those laws which have been enacted with so much severity against the combinations of servants, labourers, and journeymen. The workmen, accordingly, very seldom derive any advantage from the violence of those tumultuous combinations, which, partly from the interposition of the civil magistrate, partly from the superior steadiness of the masters, partly from the necessity which the greater part of the workmen are under of submitting for the sake of present subsistence, generally end in nothing but the punishment or ruin of the ringleaders.

“But though, in disputes with their workmen, masters must generally have the advantage; there is, however, a certain rate below which it seems impossible to reduce, for any considerable time, the ordinary wages even of the lowest species of labour.

“A man must always live by his work, and his wages must at least be sufficient to maintain him.”

“What I have just read,” I said, putting down the book, “are statements of facts and observations in the days of Adam Smith. I will now read some opinions expressed in our own day by Thorold Rogers, in *The Economic Interpretation of History*. On page 311 he says :

“‘When men put their capitals together in any direction, neither society nor political economists have a word to say against them. The defence of such associations is obvious, their utility unquestionable, their necessity, in some cases indisputable.’

“And on page 314 he says :

“‘The combination which in capital was considered beneficent, in labour was treated as felony, and even when the felony was extinguished by abrogating the labour statutes, was left to the elastic interpretation of the common law doctrine of conspiracy.’

“Again, on page 313, he says :

“‘Now in a trade union or labour partnership the workmen do precisely that which the promoters of joint-stock enterprise undertake. The latter are individually too poor for the enterprise ; collectively they are rich enough. They are too weak alone ; they are strong enough in union or combination.’

“Still further, on pages 314 and 315, the same writer says :

“‘Even now the movement, instead of being welcomed as a virtual exposition of the joint-stock principle as applied to labour, and therefore as just and as innocent as any analogous institution among capitalists for the furtherance of manufacture and trade, is looked on with suspicion and dislike, constantly misrepresented and as far as possible thwarted.

“‘Every calling, especially those which are professional,

always has its own code of honour. There are offences against the unwritten code of these callings which are punished by the members of these callings with the connivance, perhaps with the approval, of the public. Is that wrong *per se* in workingmen which is right in medical and legal practitioners? If a physician or surgeon is guilty of unprofessional conduct, his fellows decline to serve with him, as far as possible exclude him from their society, or even exclude him from practice. * * *

“I see no reason why a similar rule of action should not be adopted by artisans, and acknowledged by employers. It might make better and more trustworthy workmen ; for the machinery of such a censorship would certainly increase the self-respect of those who were subjected to it.’”





CHAPTER XVII

THE INWARD CONFLICT

“WELL,” said my uncle, when I had finished, “what are we to infer from all this?”

“We are to infer,” I replied, “that since there exists on the one hand the power of concentrated wealth, there should, on the other hand, exist an equal power in the concentration of labour. Otherwise, it must necessarily follow that the stronger will crush the weaker. A balance of power between them would tend toward equitable adjustment of the questions which concern both sides.”

“Are you speaking,” asked my uncle, “from a rich man’s point of view, or from a workingman’s point of view?”

“From neither,” I replied. “I simply take the stand of an American citizen, whose desire it is to promote the political, social and economic welfare of all the people.”

“If I did not know you,” said my uncle, “and heard you say that, I should take you for a cheap candidate for Congress, speaking to your constituency for impression’s sake. Knowing you as I do, I can only conclude you have a tendency toward sentimentalism.”

" I am reminded of an incident that seems pertinent. When I was a boy, I once saw our German cook take a dish of sliced cucumbers, and, after sprinkling them with salt, cover them with a plate, on the top of which she placed a flat-iron. ' Why do you do that ? ' I asked. ' Come back soon,' she said, ' and I will show you.' I did so, and the cook, removing the flat-iron and the plate, then held the dish of cucumbers over the sink, when, to my surprise, quite an amount of water flowed from it as it was tipped. ' Where did the water come from ? ' I asked. ' Out of the cucumbers,' said she, and added, ' the salt and the weight of the flat-iron forced the water out.' ' But why do you want to force the water out ? ' I persisted. ' To take the stomach-ache out of the cucumbers,' she replied. ' That water contained all that does the harm. Now the cucumbers are wholesome, and you may eat all you like.'

" So, my dear nephew," he continued, " the thing which will do the same for your mind in its present state, which will remove the nonsense and sentimentalism from it, is for you to enter actively into a business career. Business contact, business experience and business laws will soon remove the mass of objectionable, impracticable ideas which seem to possess you. Do not for a moment think that I speak as a crusty old man, soured by unfortunate experiences. I am, on the contrary, as you know, a successful man of business, and believe I understand what I am talking about.

" Let your suggestion be once carried out ; let there be a concentration of say five million workingmen in one organisation, and what would happen ? Demagogues and blatherskites would fill every office of the land, from president and chief-justice down to pound-master. Corruption would run riot, impracticable and

crazy reformers would swarm like rats in an old market; treachery, villainy, cruelty and inhumanity would be rampant; and fortunate indeed would that once rich man be who could gather up sufficient means to take himself off to Russia, or to some other country where centralised power was still out of the hands of savage beasts.

"I would give a substantial sum if I could recall what I said last night at the meeting. I wish you would ask your stenographer to bring me all the copies, together with his short-hand report, so that I can at least destroy the record of my own words."

"As you like, Uncle Harry," said I; and I called the stenographer.

"Have you finished the copies of the report of the meeting?" I inquired.

"Yes, sir."

"Please bring them to me, together with your short-hand notes."

"Six copies are delivered," he replied. "The secretary asked if he might have them this noon, for distribution, so I gave them to him. Here is your copy."

"You might be able to get those copies, Joseph, if you sent for them," said my uncle. "Or you might go after them yourself."

"That would hardly do, Henry," observed my aunt, "after what you said last night about consenting to the publicity of a report."

Further conversation on this point was prevented by the arrival of a written message for my uncle. He took it, glanced at it, and, with a smile of triumph, handed it to me, saying, "Read."

I read :

"The Committee on Grievances have just called on me, and gave notice that the men will quit to-night unless Wilkins is taken back. What shall I do? J. T. McCALL, Contractor."

"Take him back," was the reply of my uncle; and, dismissing the messenger, he said: "You see? This man Wilkins is a bully; he grossly insulted my private overseer, whom I sent to inspect the Third Avenue buildings now going up, and I ordered McCall to dismiss him. You see the result. The cowardly loafer is to go back to his place, or I have a strike on my hands. But I am glad this happened, for it illustrates what I have just been saying."

"I wish," he continued, "that I had authority over you; but as I have not, I earnestly beg and entreat you, Joseph, and Dorothy as well, to avoid, in future, any hob-nobbing with these workingmen."

Saying which he looked at his watch, and, with an exclamation of surprise at the lateness of the hour, hurried away to meet his appointments.

"What do you think of all this, Aunt Barbara?" asked Dorothy.

"I hardly know," my aunt replied. "I am very much puzzled. I certainly thought last night that my husband spoke and acted in full accord with reason and conscience; but I confess that what he said to-day seems reasonable, too; does it not?"

"According to our standard of reasoning," I replied, "yes."

"What he said to-day may accord with our reason," said Dorothy, "but I do not believe it accords with the promptings of our conscience. I believe," she added, after a pause, "as I told Mr. Morton, that last night he was his normal self; but to-day he seems to be under the business influence of the real estate man."

“He seems to me,” said I, “to have been normal on both occasions.”

“That sounds paradoxical,” remarked my aunt. “Can you make it clearer?”

“I cannot make it so clear as I should like,” I replied. “I can only give the impression on my mind. First of all, I think we do Mr. Morton an injustice so long as we attribute to him alone these paradoxical opinions. I think each one of us here, as well as others elsewhere, is influenced by similar contradictory opinions. I do not know whether mankind was created perfect, as is set forth in Genesis, or whether we have evolved from some primitive and savage type. But whichever is the case, mankind must necessarily be possessed of the two conflicting ideas. If we adopt the version in Genesis, we must conclude that man was originally perfect, but that since the fall he has degenerated. If we accept the theory of evolution, we must conclude that, originally, man was on a level with brute animals, but that evolutionary development has brought about his higher ideas.”

“But did not the higher ideas come to us through revelation,” asked my aunt,—“through the religious teachers commissioned by God to teach those ideas to us?”

“Unquestionably,” I replied. “There is no greater factor in the elevation of mankind than such revelation.”

“Then must it not follow,” remarked Dorothy, “that persons who are governed solely by the real estate man’s idea are uncivilised?”

“So it seems,” replied my aunt; and she hesitated a moment. “But I do not think my husband is governed solely by this idea.”

“Nor do I,” hastily exclaimed Dorothy. “You

remember I said that very thing to him only a short time ago."

"I think as you do," said I; "and I believe, as I said, that each one of us here, as well as others elsewhere, is influenced by these contradictory opinions, which are constantly striving within us for the mastery."

"How strange," mused Dorothy, "to think of this conflict going on constantly within us, almost as told by Zoroaster or in the Avesta! We, too, seem to be actuated on the one hand by Ormuzd, the good principle, and on the other hand by Ahriman, the principle of evil."

"Yes," I said, "and also by Mithra, the conciliator."

"Which principle will obtain the victory?" asked my aunt.

"The law of development would indicate," I replied, "that in the end the good principle must prevail."

"Let us hope so," said my aunt, as she and Dorothy arose to go.

Late that afternoon my uncle departed unexpectedly for Chicago, whither he had been summoned on business which was expected to consume several days. And on the following day Dorothy, who had learned of the illness of a relative in Boston, deemed it her duty to leave us also for a time.

Thus left to myself, I became concerned as to what course to pursue in regard to the next club meeting, the date appointed for which soon began to draw near. Finally, after deliberation, I decided not to attend, but to send my stenographer to make his report, in the manner on which we had first agreed.

This I did; and the report is here reproduced in full.



CHAPTER XVIII

COMPETITION AND COLLECTIVISM COMPARED

REPORT of the meeting of The Twentieth Century Club, New York, March 15, 1899.

Meeting began at 7.45 P.M. All members present.

Ezra.—The meeting will now come to order. The secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting.

After the reading of the minutes, Ezra arose and said: "The subject for the meeting this evening is 'Competition and Collectivism Compared.' Mr. Bradley is censor of the evening. The first speaker will be Mr. Quail."

Mr. Quail.—Mr. President and Gentlemen: I deem it proper to begin my remarks this evening by quoting the closing paragraph of the president's remarks at the last meeting. He said: "Is it not possible, after all, that these very men, these very socialists, may be the seers, the prophets, of this age, and for the whole world?"

Socialists tell us that collectivism is a means for the attainment of that measure of equity in our social system which would remove the cause of the injustice now inflicted by a favoured few upon the unfortunate many.

Now this may be a small matter to a millionaire; for if collectivism would give him social equality, does he not without it have all that equality and much more besides? But the case is quite different with those who are not millionaires, and especially with those who are not likely to become such.

Take the case of my people, the coloured race : what chance have we under the present system? Under it our race and colour serve as a handicap to our progress. We must work at a cheaper rate, and assume a more servile air than others, or else starve. And when we attempt to comply with these requirements, we are denominated "scabs" by one class and inferiors by the other. And thus the inferiority, from which we would fly, is the more thrust upon us and riveted fast, until in sheer despair we are tempted to question the wisdom and the goodness of the Almighty. We are tempted to ask Him why He has placed a heart within us which yearns for political, social and economic justice, why He has placed us in a framework and physical form like those of other men, and has at the same time blackened our skin. Why has this been done? Was it simply to provide the brutal and the heartless of other races and colours a chance to vent their brutality and heartlessness upon us?

What chance is there for escape? Will a period of time under this climate whiten our skins and straighten our hair? Alas, no such hope comes to our relief. Must we continue to receive, at the hands of the dominant races, such dribblets of social justice as they may choose to give us; and in a manner much the same as that in which they give their refuse food to the tramp and to the criminal?

And now when collectivism is offered by socialists as

a remedy which promises to replace the present unhappy and unjust discriminations against us by a system so just and equitable as to meet the ideal of our highest aspiration, shall we refuse to accept it? Shall we shut out this ray of hope for such a blessed consummation? And why? What other help, what other hope is there for my race?

I confess that before I heard Mr. Fisher on the subject, I was under the impression that, in some way unknown to me, the time would come when my race would really enjoy that equality and fraternity which the common brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God entitle the black man to receive at the hands of the white man.

It is true that I spoke hopefully and even cheerfully at our last meeting concerning the destiny of this nation. I was then animated with the hope that my people were to be sharers in its destiny and in its glory. But, alas, what Mr. Fisher said at that meeting concerning my people is only too true. The people of my colour, under the present system, are outcasts; not only outcasts as the poor are among the rich; we are likewise outcasts among the poor. What white man, however degraded, would care to change colour with us, even if thus he could gain the level of his ambition? Wherever we go, wherever we turn, we find ourselves the victims of that embodiment of refined cruelty known as ostracism. Of what avail higher education, exalted achievement? Would these not serve but to develop and intensify our sufferings?

If our humiliations and our manifold wrongs are to continue, would it not be more manly, and less hypocritical, for the white races, once for all, to declare, and to declare openly, that we are not members of the human race, that we are animals pure and simple? It is

true that God's Book declares that we, too, are His children ; but then, if the white man can set God aside in his treatment of his black brother, he might just as well, for consistency's sake, modify the wrong by claiming that God was mistaken.

Shakespeare makes Shylock complain of the treatment of him and of his people at the hand of Christians ; but what is the complaint of the Jew when measured by our complaint ? If the Jew would but truckle to fanaticism and bigotry, if he would but choose to run to the baptismal font, to change his religion, and to intermarry, could he not soon obliterate any and all causes for aggressive enmity ? Surely. And would any Christian denomination refuse to accept him ? Are they not one and all willing and eager to receive him ? The complaint of the Jew is, therefore, of his own making ; he can remove it at will. But, alas, we poor negroes are not so happily situated ; we are black, and our colour is our prison. Shall it continue to be so for all time ?

Wherein is our escape from this prison, from the slavery of ostracism ? If we see now a ray of hope, a chance for escape through socialism, shall we not grasp that chance, even as a drowning man grasps at a straw ? Surely. Then may God speed the day of the real emancipation, of the real equality, of the real fraternity, of the real liberty !

Ezra.—The second speaker will be Mr. Valanti.

Mr. Valanti.—Mr. President and Gentlemen : The subject for discussion this evening is " Competition and Collectivism Compared," but how can we practically compare the known with the unknown ? The competitive system has been and is in operation ; may we say the same of collectivism ?

That some phase of communistic collectivism has been in operation in various countries and at divers times is true. That collectivism, on the scale proposed by modern socialists, has ever been in operation is not true. It is, therefore, in the form of a theoretic and speculative proposition that it comes before us ; and in comparing it with the competitive system, we should not lose sight of the fact that we are comparing a condition with a theory.

I confess that, as a theory, collectivism has many points of attraction, especially for the poor, the oppressed, the unfortunate and the outcast. But the same may be said of whiskey, tobacco and opium ; for they, too, lull the senses and soothe the nerves ; so do story books, and plays which suit the humor of the occasion. But these things are simply palliatives, from which there is an awakening to the reality, to the stern reality, of a condition. We must sooner or later awaken to the real and, to many of us, unpalatable fact that we are governed by a condition. Try as we may, we are held fast in the embrace of a law as imperiously operative in social affairs as is the law of gravitation in the domain of physics.

Dreamers have from time to time tried to set this law aside. We see instances of such attempts during the Roman Republic, in the form of repeated cancellations of debts, in the agrarian laws, and in the granting of largess to the poor. In modern times we see similar efforts in the uprisings of the peasants and of the poor in Europe, and in the notable struggle in France when the guillotine performed its bloody function.

What were the results of all these attempts ? They scarcely produced a ripple on the surface of the social

current ; the competitive system continued, and still continues.

It is patent to all that the competitive system demands the awakening and development of all the qualities latent within us, which, when exerted, make for the highest service, and thus earn the highest reward.

But now come the moral, mental and spiritual laggards, the lazybones of the social structure, and try to show us an easy road to happy-land. These, permitting themselves free rein, spur on their imaginations, and succeed in the childish task of overcoming a condition by a theory. In reality, what have they accomplished ? What but mischief ?

The agitation of socialistic theories in recent years has had the vicious effect of branding as socialistic, communistic and anarchistic every attempt of the workers to better their condition.

We all know that the workingman who is not a socialist or an anarchist simply seeks, through agitation, to remove such prominent obstacles in the path of his progress as he believes it is in his power to remove.

The socialist or anarchist, on the other hand, sneers and jeers at all this as a vain attempt at profitless palliatives. Of palliatives he will have none. Nothing short of unconditional surrender of the present system, and the substitution of his theory in its stead, will suit him. His continuous and vehement shouting has tended to create the impression among the general public that all labour agitations are necessarily socialistic or anarchistic. This impression is highly injurious to the cause of labour, and loses for it that sympathy from the employing class which it might otherwise have.

We who are members of labour unions are not

deceived in these matters. We know that radical reformers are but an insignificant fraction of the great body composing the industrial legions; and, even then, the camp of the radicals is divided into the antagonistic divisions of single taxers, collectivists, communists and anarchists.

That there is much yet to be done in the interest of labour, no one will deny; but what profit can we expect from an agitation which has for its ultimate end the impracticable and the unattainable?





CHAPTER XIX

A PLEA FOR SOCIALISM

Ezra.—The third speaker will be Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher.—Mr. President and Gentlemen : Several years ago I was at Owens Lake, in Inyo County, California. Captain Keeler, a pioneer of that section, accompanied me to several points of interest in the valley. Stopping in front of the lake, and facing the Inyo Mountains, he pointed toward the foot hills, and said, "Right over there you can see the Indian Princess Owahlanche."

I looked, but could only see a group of barren craggy rocks. "Look again," he said. I did so, but with no better results.

"Not all who come here can see the princess," said Captain Keeler, "and the Indians have a tradition that the evil-hearted can never see her."

I tried as hard as I could to catch a glimpse of the princess, but with no success. As I was about to abandon the attempt, I was delightfully surprised to discern the clear-cut and life-like outlines of an Indian woman's head and bust. It was majestic and classic in simplicity, grandeur and beauty.

"Was this done by the Indians?" I asked.

“ It could hardly have been done by human hands,” replied the Captain ; “ for what seems, from this point of view, but a few feet in diameter, is, in reality, several hundred feet in width, and no vestige of the outline can be observed when one is much nearer the mountain side. It is only from this point that the outline can be seen, and only then by the few, and after much effort.”

As with Owahlanche, so with collectivism ; some come too near, and see only boulders or flint-edged rocks ; others are too far off, and see only a mountain range.

There was a time in the history of the world when opinions on government, on religion, on conduct and on manners were property, and owned by high priest and by king. By these they were sold in wholesale lots to dukes and bishops. At last they reached the people, who bought them at retail from priest, soldier and policeman.

Then came the pioneers of science, who investigated this strange property, this curious merchandise, and found much of it adulterated, impure, valueless and unwholesome. They then set to work and produced many and varied improvements, and offered them to the people at their proper value. The people would have eagerly availed themselves of this offer, but the kings and high priests, — those arch-monopolists, — would not permit it.

At length the people arose, and, brushing aside these restrictions, declared the men of science their patrons, and became their clients. And the men of science continued gaining patronage in every department of scientific research excepting one, and the name of that one department is social science, — socialism.

The men of science were at length permitted to busy

themselves in religion, in astronomy, in chemistry, in geology, in botany, in psychology, and even in politics. But a strict, sharp watch was kept on them everywhere, to prevent them from entering the field of socialism.

An exception was, indeed, made in the case of those who took up this branch of inquiry for the purpose of misrepresenting and belittling it ; but no mercy was shown the disinterested and catholic worker in this department. And so it continues even to this day.

Shall it always be so? No ! The time will come when this barrier shall likewise be brushed aside. The very soul of progress, the true trend of development, demand the abandonment of error, wrong and injustice as embodied in the competitive system.

While much error has already been removed from many branches of science, there is still great darkness in the department of social science. How may this darkness be dispelled, so long as the light is excluded by rigorous restrictions? Fortunately, there are forces at work, which, in their operation, will presently come to the aid of the socialist, and will enable him to overcome any and all artificial obstructions. Nor need there be any difficulty in perceiving what these forces are ; they are so prominently in evidence that they cannot be concealed or obscured.

Chief among these forces comes the multiplication of inventions; second, the concentration of wealth; third, —as we were informed by our president at the last meeting,— the shifting of the world's price-fixing base for the staples of agriculture from Western and Central Europe and the United States to the cheapest land and labour countries of the world ; fourth, the introduction of the factory system into the Orient.

Some economists, in commenting upon all this, say:

“ When wages decline to a certain degree, and when at the same time all other things decline to a like degree, then there is neither loss nor gain ”; which is the same as saying : “ Whenever a man begins to shrink, and shrinks to a certain degree, and when his coat at the same time shrinks to a corresponding degree, then man and coat will fit each other, even though the man began as a Goliath and ends as a Tom Thumb.” But how would it work if the man grew larger and stouter, and the coat at the same time continued to shrink and shrink ? Do not our wants increase with the increase of civilisation, and are not our means decreasing ? Universal education and universal suffrage have increased current needs, but the new and significant changes now going on in the world of economics tend to diminish the just return for labour. In what must all this end ?

Now let us take another view of the subject. In the beginning of the historic period, we find the competitive system but feebly developed. The communal system prevailed to a greater extent than is generally understood. Family groups and tribes, as a rule, held and worked their lands in common, and traces of this system have come down to us in the Mir of Russia.

The concentration of the tribes into nations facilitated the formation of two distinct and vicious organisations,—the military order and the priestly order. These two orders combined to levy toll ; one toll for the chief bridge-builder, the high priest, and the other toll for the chief soldier, the recognised and privileged wholesale robber.

And this toll,—what of it in our day ? Pay unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s. But what of the modern Cæsar, capitalism ? What of his rent, his

interest, his profit, and his swollen charges for direction? Behold his intricate network, his cunning devices for exacting toll. Instead of the traditional penny bearing Cæsar's likeness which was shown the Master in Palestine, let us take a lamp, a chair, a pane of glass, a yard of cloth, or any of the thousand and one objects of manufacture, and inquire what proportion of the retail price is represented by the cost of raw material and labour, and what proportion is represented as the toll of the modern Cæsar, capitalism? This will tell the story, and yet not all of it; for, besides these, there are other and many ten thousand methods for the absorption of the rightful earnings of labour. These earnings it is intended to restore through collectivism.

Is not the earth fruitful enough in response to labour? Are there not enough labourers? Then why do the millions lack? We permit the greedy, swinish absorber and toll-gatherer to rob and deceive us. Shall there not be an end to this gigantic wrong, to this intolerable evil?

We are told that collectivism will engender still greater wrongs, that it will breed still greater tyrants than are our present toll-gatherers. We are told that it will produce a dangerous power, and will concentrate that power in the hands of the few, by whom it will be likely to be abused. The fallacy of this statement is evident as soon as we observe the operation of any well-organised joint-stock company. In these, does not each man find in the success of the whole the measure of his own success? And what is now done by several members of a corporation will be the better done by all the people.

We are further told that under socialism, under collectivism, there will be no incentive to exertion or to

development, because there will be no extra money reward for such exertion. But cannot rewards of honour and renown do as much to spur on endeavour as can rewards of money?

They tell us we are but few in numbers, and that our members belong to the poor and outcast class. But was it not the same with Christianity in the beginning of its history, and has not Christianity outgrown this condition? So likewise will socialism outgrow it.

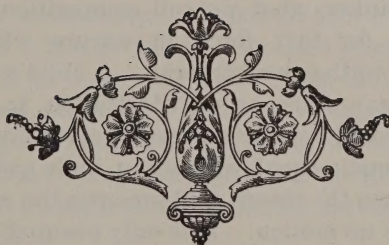
Some persons ignorantly or maliciously condemn the socialistic doctrine, calling it a system of anarchy; but how can that be anarchy which is to be governed by law and directed by constituted authority? Does not socialism utterly abhor, as an abomination, the anarchic industrialism, the anarchic commercialism and the anarchic social condition of to-day? Is not its main endeavour directed to the uprooting of anarchy? By what term may we designate the stubborn reiterations which persist in falsely denominating socialism as a system of anarchy? Is it not in reality just the opposite? May we not justly claim that such opposition must be the result of either malice or ignorance?

In conclusion, I would say that a fair comparison of competition and collectivism must, in the end, show that the former is the embodiment of selfishness, and the latter of unselfishness. Competition is the luxuriant field of vice, of crime, of hate and of discord. Collectivism would be the very opposite.

A fertile field, if left to itself, will produce whatever chance may cause to grow there. The same field, properly ploughed, harrowed and seeded with wheat, will produce in abundance material for bread. Each grain of seed wheat in the earth will sprout, and, coöperating with its fellow-grains, will absorb the nutritive elements

above and below the surface, leaving no room for the many ten thousand weeds which grew there before. So likewise is it proposed, under socialism, to replace the present anarchical system of waste, misuse and chance, by a system of law and of regulated authority.

May we each and all of us live to see the dawn of this new era in the history of man; an era in which inequity shall be overthrown by equity, and justice shall sway, rule and govern! Such is the aim of socialism; let us hope that this great ideal may soon be realised.





CHAPTER XX

SOME OBJECTIONS

Ezra.—The fourth speaker will be Mr. Moore.

Mr. Moore.—Mr. President and Gentlemen: It seems to me as practicable to replace competition by collectivism as it would be to replace motion by inertia.

Whatever does away with competition at the same time does away with collectivism.

In my opinion, what we call competition is but another term for that force in nature which grants ascendancy to the predominant. A child's see-saw in operation may serve as an illustration to make this plain. A board poised at its centre gives predominance to neither end; equal weights at both ends, at equal distances from the centre, still preserve the equilibrium, and there is no motion. It is only unequal weights, or unequal distances from the centre, which will cause one side of the board to ascend and the other to descend.

"But," say some, "this is an illustration of the law of gravitation, and has no connection whatever with the question at issue." The see-saw in motion illustrates, it is true, the ascendent of the predominant in the domain of physical law, but the same law, the ascendent of the predominant, also sways, governs, and

rules in the domain of psychic law. This law is not only operative in gravitation, but is likewise manifest in the tear of the widow, the sob of the orphan, the impulsive longing of the lover, the tender glance of the beloved and the greed of the miser, in the scowl of jealousy and in the murderous glance of rage.

The operation of this law clearly manifests that the actuating force which causes the emotions of joy or grief, of love or hatred, of confidence or distrust, and of sympathy or repulsion, is centred in that which predominates. It is the desire to gain or the fear of losing some fancied or real predominant object which governs our emotional manifestations.

And these manifestations—are they not evidences of our power of discrimination? When we discriminate, do we not assort, sift, compare, reject and elect? And when we do all this, do we not permit the various ideas which present themselves to us to compete with one another for ascendancy? Is not all this competition? It is indeed. Nor is this all; for each of us is after all but a bundle of conserved force. The thoughts which have entered our minds, which have impressed themselves upon our consciousness, stamp us what we are. Yet no rational being can assimilate an idea, an opinion, except through discrimination, through the law of competition.

Shall we, can we, then, as rational beings, do away with competition? Do we not see the law of competition govern and control in all the world of matter and of spirit? Is it not grounded in universal law? How, therefore, can we ever do away with competition?

In saying what I have said, I do not wish it understood that I am perfectly satisfied with conditions as they are, or that I think improvements cannot be made.

On the contrary, I believe that the great achievements in development are before us and not behind us. I sympathise with that great body of earnest workers known as socialists, for I believe many of them to be disinterested and zealous in the cause of humanity. Believing so, I deem it my duty to tell them to revise their proposition, in order that, when revised, it may be in accord with universal law, and not contrary to it.

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Bradley, the censor of the evening.

Mr. Bradley.—Mr. President and Gentlemen: I shall begin my remarks by criticising the second speaker, reserving until later my criticism of the first.

The second speaker, in commenting on the results of agitation by the people, said: "What were the results of these attempts? They scarcely produced a ripple on the surface of the social current."

Is that a fact? Is there any historic warrant for that assertion? Certainly not; we all know that there is a most marked difference between the present condition of the people and that which existed prior to the agitation. We all know that universal serfdom was the former lot; whereas, at this time, serfdom, such as it was, is almost entirely obliterated from the earth. Was it not agitation which overthrew despotism in France, which modified absolutism everywhere and which brought forth this Republic? Beyond a doubt it was.

Further on, the speaker designated socialists as "moral, mental and spiritual laggards, the lazybones of the social structure." Did he have warrant for this? Certainly not. Not if we are to judge by such men as Carl Marx or Ferdinand Lassalle, or by the many other and lesser lights in the socialistic field of agitation throughout the world.

The third speaker, who so vehemently argued for collectivism as against competition, made the fatal admission that collectivism might be maintained by rewards of honour or renown. Is it possible to earn such without competition? No; therefore his whole argument falls to the ground.

The fourth speaker asks the socialist to revise his theory of socialism in order that it may conform to what he calls the universal law of competition, which is about the same as if anyone were to say, "Let us abolish competition by the adoption of the competitive system." Thus we refute his conclusions by a *reductio ad absurdum*.

And now let us turn to the first speaker. I am simply amazed at his sudden conversion to socialism.

At the meeting before the last, in speaking on "The Republic and Its Destiny," and in his concluding sentence on citizenship, he says, "This it is which should make any man feel proud who, bearing the honoured title of American citizen, understands how to appreciate that title." Has he, in this short space of time, tired of the "honoured title"? Has he now girded up his loins, ready to grasp the red flag of socialism? So it seems; but what kind of a transfer has he made? Is it really to his profit?

Are the socialists as eager to win the people of his colour over to their side as he seems eager to join? And if negroes, why not Chinamen or Japanese? Yet we see no such stir to gain over the dark-skinned races made by socialists as is made by the religious denominations. In fact socialists generally display a discreet silence on the subject, and do but little if any missionary work in this direction.

But supposing, for the sake of argument, that socialism

succeeds in establishing itself, what then? Does our coloured friend suppose that, when this shall have come to pass, he and his people will then be given an equal chance and an equal right to the good things of the earth? Then why not the same rights to the horse, the sheep, the dog or the hog? "But," he would reply, "we are human beings, and the things you name are animals."

True, so far as conventional definitions are concerned. But the real world-measure, as it is bound to be under any consistently operative system, must in its final analysis be Service Value. Should it be found that the service value of the negro is below the average standard, could he then expect an equal share with superiors?

Must not the negro first of all climb to that higher level which, when reached, shall entitle him to the name of equal among men before he may justly claim equality? Any other conclusion would seem to me to be untenable, inequitable and absurd.





CHAPTER XXI

THIRD SUMMARY BY EZRA

Ezra.—Gentlemen : Before reviewing the several remarks I feel inclined to state that the impressions produced on my mind by the several speakers, and my impression of the discussion as a whole, differ radically. Each of the speakers, whether for or against, seemed, for the time being, to carry me with him. But when I try to arrive at a final conclusion, in a form so crystallised as to be readily apprehended by my mind, I find it impossible to do so.

I presume the reason for this lies in the fact that five, and seemingly conflicting, opinions have been presented. Let us now see if there cannot be found a way of conciliating presentations apparently so divergent. Can we not find a way of unravelling this tangled mass of seeming contradictions? If this could be done it would probably enable us to grasp that broader and more catholic view of the question which it would be highly desirable to attain.

Now, there is a way which presents itself ; one, indeed, which we have employed on previous occasions with good effect. It is this. Let us set aside those propositions of each speaker to which we can give our

assent. Having done so, we may then see what kind of a summary this will result in.

To begin with, the first speaker asserts the existence, under the present system, of certain social inequalities. The third speaker supplements this by the further assertion of the existence of economic inequality, or inequality in distribution. We may affirm both of these assertions to be facts. Both the first and third speakers further assert that these inequalities can be removed by socialism. And this, at the present time, we need neither affirm nor deny.

The second speaker asserts that competition is a known, and collectivism is an unknown, proposition ; he further asserts that there can be no practicable comparison between the known and the unknown. And we may affirm this to be true.

The third speaker asserts that the intellectual development of mankind is largely due to the labours of the men of science, and in contravention of the original desires of Church and State. And we may affirm this to be true.

He likewise asserts that certain forces are at work which must powerfully affect and modify the present system. Among these forces he mentions, first, the multiplication of inventions ; second, the concentration of wealth ; third, the shifting of the world's price-fixing base for the staples of agriculture from the highest to the lowest priced land and labour countries of the world ; fourth, the introduction of the factory system into the Orient. And we may affirm all this to be true.

The third speaker would have us infer that under our present system of competition, capitalism absorbs, in the form of rent, interest, profit and direction, too great a proportion of the earnings of labour. And we may also affirm this to be true.

We thus find that the present system engenders a large measure of inequality and injustice, which the socialists claim can be removed by collectivism.

And now it is proper for us to inquire what collectivism is? Socialists tell us it is the collective ownership and management of the means of production, and the abolition of competition. And socialists have undertaken the task of bringing this about.

That such a plan can never be materialised, as a whole, is evident; but that some considerable good may, in the end, be accomplished through this agitation, there can be no question. Like all other reform propositions, socialism will be obliged to modify its original form, and adapt itself to conditions which shall permit the adoption of its tenable and practicable parts.

That some of the more prominent phases of socialism will in the end prevail, there can hardly be any question; for, as has been pointed out by the third speaker, the development of the new forces now at work must in the end produce powerful social and economic changes.

Socialists tell us that concentration of wealth, if continued in the future in the same ratio as in the past, must in the end place the means of production in the hands of a syndicate which, having no competitor, will become the sole international employer. In that event, should the people deprive such a world-syndicate of its right to private ownership of the means of production, we should then have that kind of collectivism which most socialists strive after. But would such be a practicable or an enduring system? By no means; for, as has been shown by the second and by the fourth speaker, we can never do away with competition.

In saying this I do not mean to imply that the world must necessarily continue that kind of competition

which generates the desire to absorb wealth for the mere sake of possession. Is there not a way of stimulating genius and energy by some other incentive as efficient as is the desire for private gain ?

Unfortunately we have not many instances illustrative of the efficacy of other incentives, but we have some; and those instances are decisive. We need only turn to ancient Greece and to her Olympian games. What great feats, what great deeds, and what great accomplishments were not exhibited there ! It was at these games that the runners, the wrestlers, the musicians, the artists, the poets, the writers and the philosophers came to compete with one another. And a crown of leaves was deemed sufficient reward for achievements the renown of which has come down to the present day—a renown which has made ancient Greece the peer of the most accomplished nations of antiquity. To a great extent a similar competitive system of high renown and of exalted honour stimulated the labours of the sages and prophets of Judea. In a modified form, a similar effect is produced by many of the competitors for military honours, or for exalted positions in government. Acts of heroism also illustrate this same phase.

What, after all, beyond affording the ordinary means of subsistence, is personal possession ? Is it not merely a symbol for the attainment of respect ? A man covets respect from his fellow-man, and this he finds, at the present time, in the possession of surplus wealth. He finds that the greater store of surplus wealth will invariably bring him that greater respect which he craves ; hence the accumulation of wealth becomes his greatest incentive. Give him a symbol of respect in another form, let it have an

equal current value in bringing him the respect and the honour which achievement ever craves, and he will show no lack of high endeavour and of exalted achievement.

To deny the individual the stimulus of reward in any form, and to expect of him the high endeavour which progress demands, is, in my opinion, an absurdity. So long, therefore, as socialism is offered as a plan for the absolute abolition of competition or of competitive rewards in any form, so long must it be considered as utterly impracticable. When, however, it shall advocate another and more progressive form of competitive reward, it will then be on the high road to accomplishment.

That such modification would be favourable to the spread of socialism there can be no question, for it will then be in a more acceptable form, and more readily comprehended. That some such reform will in the near future be imperatively necessary, there can be no question; for no one can deny the fact that the concentration of wealth is going on. Nor is the industrial development of the Orient and the introduction there of the factory system any longer a secret. The change in the price-fixing base for the staples of agriculture is now going on, and astonishment may well be expressed at the general lack of information and interest as to the significance of this change as a factor in ultimate economic changes.

Yet all this is of primary importance. When this country was the centre or price-fixing base for agricultural staples, the stability of the then high ruling prices served to maintain in the United States the stability of other industries. Now, however, when the price-fixing base is being changed to the countries

of South America, North Africa, Australia, India, and Southern and Eastern Russia, the privilege of price-fixing is removed from the highest priced, and transferred to the lowest priced land and labour countries of the world. The consequent reduction in the world's price of the staples of agriculture which this has caused tends largely to reduce the primary purchasing power in the United States, and this condition in turn must tend to affect adversely all other departments of industry in this country.

On this head it may not be out of place to note that it is expected that the Trans-Siberian railway, connecting St. Petersburg with Vladivostock, will have been completed within a year or two. This road will tap a new and fertile agricultural region, great enough in extent to cause a lowering of the world's price of the staples of agriculture for many years to come. All this will but tend to bring about more quickly an intensified condition adverse to labour, not only in this country, but equally throughout Western and Central Europe.

And now there is another factor which I deem proper to mention at this time. I refer to inventions. There are some who see in them a cause for the reduction in opportunities for labour. That some suffer through this factor is true ; that many others will likewise suffer as inventions multiply, may also be assented to. Yet inventions are to play no mean part in the ultimate emancipation of mankind from the bonds of inequality and injustice. Great as has been the progress in this branch of achievement in recent years, it will, no doubt, be eclipsed by much higher achievement in the near future. We may confidently look forward to the time when the tide, the trade wind, and the other available forces in nature shall have been harnessed, and

made to do service for mankind ; and when that time comes the principal factor affecting labour will be to a much greater degree under our control.

The next fifty years promise to be pregnant with changes in the economic and social domain ; sufficiently so to entitle these departments of knowledge to a primary rank in the thoughtful consideration of mankind.

At this stage of our inquiry it would be ill advised for this club to conclude its labours by adjournment. It has not up to this time come to any conclusion ; indeed, there is no room for any, for we have discovered no foundation upon which a conclusion can rest.

It would seem to me that we have thus far but pioneered the way. We have but brought to light the obstructions in our path. The principal labour of inquiry is before us, and deserves our most earnest endeavour. So far we may safely agree on this : that no political, economical or social system can be just or equitable which does not rest on the solid foundation of justice and equity. And can that be justice or equity which is not grounded in universal law ? No. And this is the conclusion of Immanuel Kant in his *Metaphysic of Ethics*, when he says, " Act from a maxim at all times fit for law universal."

Are then our political, social and economic institutions grounded on universal law ? If the answer is in the negative, it will have proven that any mere change in the present system which does not at the same time have in view universal law as a primary object can be no improvement.

What test may we apply which will determine this question as accurately as a plumb determines for us the true line of gravitation ? I know of but one, and I will venture to submit it. I refer to that central theme

which actuates us, and from which we receive our highest inspirations for thought and deed. What, then, is our Central Theme, and what should it be? These are the questions which follow consecutively, and in the order of our inquiry.

At no time in the world's history has there been a greater necessity for impartial and broad inquiry on this head than at the present time. This, therefore, is the point which our initial work and objective endeavour so clearly indicate to us.

Mr. Bradley.—Mr. President and Gentlemen : I move that the subject for our next meeting be, “What is Our Central Theme, and What Should It Be?”





CHAPTER XXII

THE WORDS OF THE MASTER

ON the Monday morning following, I received a message by telephone from my physician, "Schubert is recovering from an operation which was found necessary in order to save his life. His arm has been successfully amputated, and he is now convalescent. In a short time I shall permit him to leave his room for a few hours each day. He desires me to thank you, in his name, for your great kindness to him and to his family."

"May I come down to see him?" I inquired.

"Come to-day, if you like," was the reply. "I think your visit will do him good."

Within an hour I was admitted to Schubert's room. I found him propped up in bed, pale and with sunken cheeks; but his expression as I entered, his smile, and the look that came to his eyes, rewarded me already for whatever I had done.

"Mr. Morton, how can I thank you?" he said.

It was only the second time I had seen the man, and I looked at him with friendly curiosity. At first I had been struck with his youthful appearance, but now I perceived that this appearance of youthfulness was due

to his fair complexion, light hair, blue eyes and yellowish beard. He was a man of perhaps forty-five, a fair average type of workingman.

He stretched out his one remaining hand toward me. "You have saved my life," said he. "You have cared for my poor children and my heartbroken wife. You took them from the street and gave them a home. And now you have found them a way to earn their living. God bless you!"

As he spoke a feeling came over me that was wholly new to my experience. And at once there followed almost a sense of shame at my capacity for entertaining such a sentiment. What, was I to find myself under the dominion of mere emotion? I had fostered a vague pride at my freedom from such influences, deeming them unworthy to affect a man of culture and refinement. And I almost involuntarily made an effort at self-control.

Whence came this new and strange feeling? Was it caused by the deep gratitude which I saw depicted on this man's face? Was it his manner of speaking? Or was it some psychic force pervading the air about me? Why had I never before experienced this mysterious and soul-reaching emotion? And the answer came quickly and with emphasis, "Because I had never before done so kindly an act."

True, I had given money to charity, but only through others, and as perfunctorily as if I had been paying my poll tax or club dues. What had been my whole life—what but trivial emptiness and pure selfishness? In hasty recapitulation I recalled all my joys, all my pleasures, all those acts which had once seemed to satisfy my soul; and not from the sum of all of them had I felt the satisfaction which I now felt at the thanks of this man before me.

It was the voice of truth, therefore, which prompted me to say, "Mr. Schubert, do not thank me. I owe you more gratitude than you owe me."

He seemed to comprehend me in a measure, for he replied, "The good God knows best how to teach us. See," he continued, as he tried to raise himself in the bed,—“see what I have learned. Before this accident I was full of wicked and deep-rooted prejudices. I hated the rich ; yet a rich man saved my life, sheltered my wife and children, and kept them from starvation. I despised negroes ; and a negro has proved himself a kind and comforting brother in my hour of affliction. I derided the Jews ; yet a Jew has come to me and comforted me and mine. And even now, while my wife attends to her duties, it is a Jewess who, with loving care, guards and guides my children.

"I boasted that I would sooner die than accept charity ; but now I realise the sacred influence of that God-like act, which blesses him who gives and him who receives. And for all this that God has taught me, through the lesson of my affliction, I now thank Him."

Bidding the man good-bye, I took my leave, and walked slowly home, pondering seriously on these matters which had taken so strong a hold upon my mind.

At the house I found a letter from Dorothy. Here are portions of what she wrote :

"BOSTON, March 16, 1899.

"*Dear Joseph :*

"Ever since I left New York I have been thinking over the subject we talked so much about, trying to see my way clear. I believe your uncle is right. A good business man can be only a business man. But, Joseph, I do wish you could be something

more. Or, if that wish is impossible of realisation, I should even prefer for you some other than a business career.

"Do not expect me to attach too much importance to society after our marriage. I have plans more in accordance with my present feelings, to which I should like to devote a share of my time and my income,—plans which I believe will accord with your feelings as well as with my own. . . ."

Soon after the date of this letter an event occurred which I will pass over with brief mention, because, however great its importance to the persons whom it concerned, its details are not essential to my story. I refer to the marriage of Dorothy and myself. After a quiet family wedding we took the next train for the West, and proceeded, in the course of our journey, as far as the Pacific slope. There we passed a time that seemed indeed all too brief; and, at the expiration of the period we had thought best to fix for our stay, we began our homeward journey. The 16th of April found us once more in New York, and warmly welcomed guests at my uncle's house.

"Have you seen any of the members of the club, Uncle Harry?" asked Dorothy, as we all, a smiling family group, were sitting talking together after luncheon.

"No, not any of the members, exactly," replied my uncle, "but some of their relations."

"How so?" I inquired.

"You see this club work is beginning to materialise, to make itself felt," my uncle answered. "I observed its effects in the number of your tenants who found out your address, and who called here inquiring after you. But I dismissed them promptly enough."

"Oh, Uncle!" protested Dorothy. "Did n't you even listen to what they had to say?"

“ So I am the heavy villain again, am I ? ” laughed my uncle. “ Well, I will send them all to you, Joseph, after this. You have a rich uncle, but I have not. One of your callers, however, amused me, and I asked him to come again.”

“ Did he want his rent reduced ? ” I asked.

“ No, he is not one of your tenants. I don’t know what he wanted.”

“ What does he look like ? ”

“ He looks like a reformed gambler who has taken to preaching. But you will have an opportunity of judging for yourself. He will be here later. He has called almost every day for a week.”

Surely enough, in the course of the afternoon the stranger was announced, and, with my uncle, I proceeded to meet him in the library. I found there a tall man, clothed in black, holding in his hand his high silk hat. His frock coat was unbuttoned, showing a heavy gold chain that crossed his waistcoat. He was smoothly shaven, but his cheeks and jaw were overspread with that purplish tinge sometimes seen on faces to which nature has given dark and heavy beards. His expression was solemn, but ambiguous, fitted equally for mirth or for mourning.

He advanced and held out his hand, which I reluctantly grasped. “ Mr. Joseph Morton ? ” he inquired.

“ That is my name,” said I. “ What can I do for you ? ”

“ Nothing,” he replied. “ I have come to do something for you.” And he drew from his waistcoat pocket, and handed to me, a card of uninviting appearance, whereon were printed the words

“ FRED KIRBY,
“ Undertaker.”

"But no one is dead here," I remarked.

"No," said he. "I know it. I do other things besides bury people."

"And what do you propose to do for me?"

"Whatever you like," he replied, with a suggestion of a wink. "Anything you want is within your reach."

"What is it you think I want?" I inquired, with some amusement.

"May I speak in the presence of this gentleman? Yes? Well, then I will come down to business. You have property in our district, sir, and though you don't know the boys in our district yet, the boys know you. You have become very popular there. Your generosity and your sympathy with the labouring classes have aroused interest among us to such an extent that anything within our gift is yours for the asking."

He paused and looked me in the eye. But, not meeting that expression of sympathy, or even of comprehension, which he sought, he turned toward my uncle. "You understand me, sir, do you not?"

"Perfectly," replied my uncle. "But my nephew is a little inexperienced in such matters. You will have to talk right out in meeting."

The tall man smiled. "I want to say here," he continued, "that I represent all the important clubs and organisations in our district. But we don't need to talk about that. I understand that this gentleman wants our support. Now I'm in a position to secure it for him. That's business, is n't it?"

"I am sorry to disappoint you," I answered, "but you have been misinformed. I have no occasion to seek political support."

"Pardon me if I am mistaken," replied the man,

with another smile, "but of course we know about your having those workmen here, and putting those tenants back, and giving them a job, and looking after the husband in the hospital. Think it over, Mr. Morton. You will find I am as good a man to deal with as anyone in the district. You have my card. Send for me any time you want information, even if you're not quite ready to talk business. Good-day, sir."

"Good-day." And the door closed on the tall man.

My uncle burst into a fit of laughter. "How do you like this result of your disinterested philanthropy, Joseph?" said he, when he had sufficiently recovered his composure.

"What a beastly world!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," said my uncle; "the world is still beastly, full of untamed beasts. The fellow you just saw is by no means the worst or the most dangerous; you will find them in forms far more difficult to detect. The course you have adopted will attract these human pests around you as molasses in summer attracts flies. I warn you again that you should abandon philanthropy. It does not rhyme with our present state of civilisation.

"Give to the poor openly, give ostentatiously, give liberally, and let the people know why you are giving. Let it be for office, to obtain trade, or for any well-known reason that people can understand, and they will magnify your virtues and overlook your vices. But give openly and disinterestedly, and the people will call you a fool, a lunatic, a humbug, and a rascal."

"True, true," I thought, and the words of the Master came to my mind: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

And I said, "You are right."



CHAPTER XXIII

CHARITY OF RICH AND POOR

IN the course of the next forenoon, Thomas, who had gone to the door in response to the bell, returned to the library with the announcement, "A woman to see you, sir."

I looked up from my desk and, observing in Thomas's hesitation a desire to say something more, I asked, "Well, Thomas, what is it?"

"There have been a lot of those people here, sir, and if you like I can save you the trouble of seeing them all."

"We will talk about that another time, Thomas," I replied. "Show the woman in."

An elderly woman entered, poorly but respectably dressed. She curtsied, and began, "Good-morning, sir. I have come to ask a favour of you."

"What is it?"

"Where I live there is a family lives overhead by the name of Burke. The woman died about a week ago and left four children: two boys, one ten and the other twelve, a girl of fourteen, and a baby. The boys sell papers, and the girl takes in sewing, but they cannot make enough to pay the rent."

"How much is the rent?"

"Eight dollars a month. If they could get it lowered for a few months, until the father comes home, it would save them from being put into the street."

"Where is the father?"

"He is a sailor, and just now on a voyage."

"Why don't they apply to the public charities?"

"The elder boy did, but there was no attention paid to him."

"Then why not apply to the minister of their church?"

"They applied to the minister, and got five dollars from him, but that went toward the funeral expenses."

"Where do they live?" I continued.

"In one of your houses on Mulberry Street, near Canal."

"How do you know it is one of my houses?"

"Because there is a girl I rent my back room to, and she heard you talked about at the place where she takes her meals. She told us where you lived."

"Is there anything else you want to say?" I asked.

"No, sir," the woman replied, and thereupon, curt-sying again, she took her leave.

"I must consult Dorothy and my aunt about this," said I to myself, when I was once more alone. The incident had suggested a new train of thought. In my recent experiences I could not but observe that the poor, as a rule, busied themselves to a much greater extent in acts of charity than did the rich. Why was this? After considering all the probable reasons, I came to the conclusion that it is fear of those results which publicity would be apt to bring about, which deters the rich from giving as freely as they otherwise would. But the poor, not being held in check by any

such motive of prudence, practise this virtue whenever prompted to do so. Take, for example, the present instance. Nothing would be simpler than for me to remit the rent of the Burke family ; but if this were done publicly, it would result in multiplying similar requests, and ultimately, as my uncle had pointed out, would lead to such a diminution of my income as materially to affect my means. That the opinion of my uncle was worthy of respectful consideration, I had had ample evidence in my recent experiences. Charitable acts would bring unpleasant results ; but to refrain from charitable acts would bring results equally unpleasant. And again the saying of the Master occurred to me, " Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

Yes, that was the solution ; and I took my check book, and was about to draw a check to the order of the Burkes. " But how stupid of me ! " I thought. " They would surely know the whole thing from my name on the check." So, enclosing a twenty-dollar bill in an envelope, I addressed it, " Miss Burke, S. W. Corner Mulberry and Canal Streets, New York," called Thomas, and directed him to mail the letter.

" Joseph," said Dorothy, as she and my aunt came in to luncheon, " do you want to hear the news of the Schuberts ? "

" Yes, indeed."

" Well, Aunt Barbara and I have been to see them. And they are in a great state of excitement because Mr. Schubert is expected home from the hospital this afternoon."

" It was a real pleasure to see them all so happy," added my aunt. " You should have seen how prettily the room was arranged and decorated in honour of the event."

"Do the children know their father has lost an arm?" I asked.

"The oldest girl may know," said Aunt Barbara. "She told me that Miss Eva Selner had taken her to see her father at the hospital."

"Is n't she lovely!" exclaimed Dorothy.

"Who?" I inquired.

"Eva," replied Dorothy.

"Yes," said my aunt. "She is a lovely girl. Mrs. Schubert can hardly say enough of her. For a part of each day she is at the Schubert house performing the service of a Sister of Mercy. The children are much attached to her."

"I had a little chat with her," Dorothy continued, "and was surprised to find her more than usually well informed. She seems devoted to her brother Ezra, and both spend much of their spare time in study."

"Now let me tell you something of my own experiences," said I. And I related my interview with the woman who had come on behalf of the Burkes, my own conclusions on the subject of charity and my sending of the money.

"I think your conclusions are sound, Joseph," observed my aunt; "but I don't approve of the way in which you applied them this morning."

"Why not?" said I.

"First, because you did not know the woman, and did not verify her story. Second, twenty dollars at one time, in the hands of inexperienced children, may do them more harm than good. Third, the money may never reach them at all, for you tell me you addressed your letter 'Miss Burke,' and a girl of fourteen, on Mulberry Street, is not, as a rule, known as 'Miss.'"

"Then what should I have done?"

"Waited," replied my aunt, "until Dorothy and I returned. We could have sent Miss Selner to the place, and she would have told you just what to do."

"Eureka!" I cried. "I have found it at last."

"Found what?" asked my aunt.

"A way of harmonising both opinions; Uncle Harry's on the one hand, and Dorothy's and mine on the other."

"How?"

"By appointing Miss Eva Selner our agent for all this kind of charitable work."

"That is a good suggestion," said my aunt, after a moment's thought. "If you give her a limit of a certain sum each year, and have her report to you from time to time, you may be able to accomplish what you aim at in a practical way."

"Very well," I continued. "Will you please appoint her, and I will set aside five hundred dollars for that purpose, as an experiment."

"And so will I," said Dorothy.

At this moment Uncle Harry joined us, and we went over, with him, our plan and the details of our discussion.

"I like your idea," he said, "and if you will agree to a stipulation which I propose, I will join you in a like amount for the same purpose."

"What is the stipulation?" I asked.

"That you confine your charitable work of this nature to what may be accomplished in this way, and that you keep the agency of Miss Selner a secret."

"I agree," I replied.

"So do I," said Dorothy.

"I had about made up my mind to join you," said

my aunt. "I will give a similar amount if Miss Selner accepts."

"Let us ask her here to lunch!" exclaimed Dorothy. "Then we can talk it all over."

"She might have some feeling about her clothes," objected my aunt, "that would prevent her coming here. But she could meet us down-town and we could all take lunch together."

"That would do," said Dorothy. "And Joseph will see them to-night and arrange it."





CHAPTER XXIV

A RELIEF COMMITTEE

SO after dinner I took the car, and proceeded to the rooms which the Selnors occupied, not far from the club room on Second Avenue. In their little parlour I found the brother and sister seated side by side at their table. The lamp light fell on perhaps a dozen books which lay scattered before them.

Ezra rose and came toward me with a smile. "We were at work on the next debate," said he.

"It seems likely to be an interesting one," I observed, "if I may judge by the title, and by your concluding remarks at the last meeting."

"I wish Miss Hamilton were coming," said Miss Selner.

"There are several reasons why Miss Hamilton cannot come," I replied. "One is that she is now Mrs. Morton. We were married a month ago."

"Indeed!" Miss Selner exclaimed. "I am sure I congratulate you both. I wish you much happiness." And her brother added an expression of his own good wishes.

"But the reason why I hesitate to bring my wife to

the club room," I said, "is the neighbourhood and the lateness of the hour. If your club would hold its meeting in my lawyer's office I think we could all attend. The location is convenient—Broadway, near Union Square—and I could have the use of the office, which is large and well appointed."

"How nice that would be!" cried Miss Selner. "The meeting could be held there just as well, could n't it, Ezra?"

"I think so. The date is Wednesday, April 19th, and if Mr. Morton finds he can have the office for that evening, I will notify the members and we will act on his suggestion."

"Where can I find you?" I asked.

"Here is the address," he replied, handing me a business card on which appeared the name of a wholesale manufacturer of cloaks and suits. "I am employed there as cutter and designer."

"Very well," I said. "You will hear from me tomorrow morning. And now I have a proposition to make to Miss Selner, which is the real reason for your seeing me here this evening."

Thereupon I outlined the plan which I had come to propose. Miss Selner shook her head as I concluded. "I am sure I appreciate your confidence and that of your friends," said she, "but, to my regret, I must decline."

"I need hardly say that I am disappointed at your refusal," I replied. "You can both judge of this when I tell you that you were the unanimous choice of those who are to contribute. In fact, you were our only choice. I feel justified, therefore, in asking your reasons for refusing."

"There are several reasons why I must decline," said

she. "First, I lack experience. Then I am seldom away from home, though lately, it is true, I have been frequently absent at the house of the Schubert family. And in any case, the work can be done to better advantage by organised charitable associations."

"Will you allow me to criticise your objections?" I asked.

"Certainly."

"Your first excuse, then, I do not think valid, as your superior judgment will counterbalance any lack of experience. Please do not receive this merely as a compliment from me, but as the opinions of my aunt, Mrs. Morton, and of my wife. The third reason is also invalid, because this charity is designed only for tenants in the houses of my uncle and myself. The only valid reason is the second: that you seldom leave your home. Can you suggest a way, Mr. Selner, by which this objection may be overcome?"

"I hardly know," Ezra replied, "unless a committee were organised, when I suppose my sister would have no objection to serving in some capacity."

"How would that do, Miss Selner?" I asked.

"That would depend upon who the members of the committee were."

"I suggest Mr. Fisher and Mrs. Bradley," said Ezra.

"They would do very well indeed. I should have no objection to serving with them. And your wife might be a member, too, Mr. Morton."

"I am glad we have found a way. Now would you be good enough to meet Mrs. Morton and my wife down-town to-morrow, and take lunch with them?" I said. "Then you can all talk over the details."

"I will, with pleasure," she answered, as she took down the address I gave her.

On my return to the house I related what had taken place.

"Miss Selner will meet you to-morrow, Dorothy," I said, "and I hope you can settle the organisation of the committee. They suggested that you be one of the members."

"How can I be on the committee?" asked Dorothy. "That would disclose the whole plan."

"You might be a consulting member," said my aunt. "It would be much pleasanter to have some direct connection with the work."

I found no difficulty in securing my lawyer's office for the evening of the 19th, and I received from the club in due time an acceptance of my invitation to use it as their place of meeting. Their note expressed also a desire that all the members of our family be present, if we cared to attend. Such was our intention; but at the last moment my uncle's business interests called him to Philadelphia, and he left us, though not before he had agreed, at my aunt's request, that she should attend the meeting with Dorothy and myself.

Accordingly, early on Wednesday evening we proceeded — my aunt, my wife and I — to my lawyer's office. We were of course the first to arrive, but we had not long to wait; and soon all the members, as well as Miss Selner, were present and in their places, attentive for the opening of the discussion.





CHAPTER XXV

OUR CENTRAL THEME

REPORT of a meeting of The Twentieth Century Club, Wednesday evening, April 19, 1899. Meeting called to order at 7.45 P.M.

Ezra.—The meeting will now come to order. The secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting.

After the reading of the minutes, Ezra rose.

Ezra.—The subject for this evening is, "What is Our Central Theme, and What Should It Be?" Mr. Quail is the censor for the evening. The first speaker will be Mr. Valanti.

Mr. Valanti.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: Inspiration, intuition, experience and reason all point to God as the Central Theme, who has established for Himself an abode on earth known to us as the Church.

Whatever be the course, whether of the individual or of the nation, unless it be in accord with this Central Theme, must in the end fail. The path which deviates from this course, which is antagonistic to this Central Theme, is the path which leads to temporal and spiritual degradation, and to eternal suffering.

In the beginning, certain among the elect of mankind,

observing the manifestations of the Spiritual Architect, intuitively drew near unto Him and worshipped Him. This they did, drawing many with them to the Throne of God.

But intuition is not in itself sufficiently clear ; nor does it offer that assurance to the soul which renders the conclusions of the mind free from doubt. Originally, therefore, the feeble rays of spiritual light flared and flickered unsteady and uncertain. And mankind in the beginning rocked to and fro, from God to Satan, and from Satan to God, having no surety in the exactitude of its course.

Then sent the Almighty Father His only begotten Son on earth to show the path, and He established His Will among men, and gave them a sure rule of life on earth, which was to be their guide to Heaven. This sure rule and true guide is the Holy Catholic Church, whose rock and foundation are Peter and his successors. And as before the coming of the blessed Lord there were spiritual darkness, selfishness, cruelty and misery, so after His coming there were, through Him, spiritual light, humanity and brotherly love. The glorious light of the Holy Catholic Church streamed its beneficent spiritual rays on a sinful world ; and cruel and debasing paganism disappeared. Instead, there arose the structure of civilisation, on the solid foundation of righteousness.

The Holy Catholic Church found the nations pagan, and she converted them to God. She opened full the valve of her mighty power to uproot the cruelty and wickedness which she found, and in their place implanted love and charity. She struggled zealously, mightily, to change the inhumanity and barbarity of the nations into humanity and civilisation. Is there a

nation or a people that has not felt, that does not feel, the beneficent influence of her world-embracing energy?

God, then, is our Central Theme ; than which none higher, surer, grander, has ever been made manifest. And this Central Theme has been embodied and made evident on earth in the enduring, unchanging form of the Holy Catholic Church. Through the ministration of the Catholic Church, the millions of her faithful sons and daughters, throughout the world, are exhorted to flee from sin and selfishness, and to clothe themselves with the spiritual garments of charity and love; charity toward man and love for God. Forgiveness for sin is freely granted on condition of repentance and restitution ; and thus acts committed in inequity are restored to the line of equity.

This Central Theme it is which has reformed a world, which has proven man, which has refined him, which has raised him to a more exalted height. This it is which has shed light into his soul,—light which shines here on earth, which shall shine in increased splendour in the future life, which shall shine forever.

Ezra.—The second speaker will be Mr. Moore.

Mr. Moore.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : Before proceeding I would like to ask the speaker who has preceded me what church he referred to when he spoke of the Holy Catholic Church? Did he refer to the Roman Catholic Church?

Ezra.—The first speaker is asked a question.

Mr. Valanti.—I did.

Mr. Moore.—I then deem it my duty to differ with my friend, the first speaker. I differ because I deem such difference to be in the interest of truth. The Central Theme should indeed be God ; but that, as we

have just been told, our Theme has been embodied and made evident on earth in the Roman Catholic Church, I deny.

It is true, as he says, that "In the beginning, certain among the elect of mankind, observing the manifestations of the Spiritual Architect, intuitively drew near unto Him and worshipped Him." And the first of these was Abraham, who, forsaking his father's house, went to Canaan, there to found a nation, which was to follow God and to be His peculiar people. In due season came Moses, who established the walls of the structure upon the foundation which Abraham had laid; and with Moses was Aaron, the father of the priests.

Besides these, and after them, came the great scribe Ezra. And in Ezra's time was reared, alongside the Temple, the House of Assembly, the Synagogue. And it was ordained that the people should, everywhere and at all times, erect for themselves these Houses of Assembly, and that each House should be provided with a schoolroom, and with a teacher to teach the young. It was furthermore ordained that prayers to God should be offered in these Houses of Assembly, and that the Scripture should be read therein to the people, and be expounded to them, and that each House of Assembly should be governed by elders, chosen by the people.

Thus was the Church born and reared; alongside the Temple, and yet apart from it.

And the time came when the Temple, having served its purpose, was abolished; and the Blessed Redeemer came, and enlarged and beautified the House of Assembly, making of it the "House of Assembly for all nations."

Shortly after the Ascension of our Lord, there arose

certain of the partially converted heathen who, under an unlawful assumption of authority, re-established the Jerusalem Temple service at Rome, and, blending with this service much of heathenism, proclaimed itself the only true and Catholic Church of Christ. Then followed strife and contention ; and for a time the partly converted heathen got the upper hand, and compelled all Christendom to bend to the will of their High Priest, the Pope. And the nations relapsed again into pagan darkness, from which they have but recently been freed by the light which was rekindled through the Reformation.

The Reformation again restored the Church, even the Church which Christ's coming enlarged and beautified ; and the name of this Church is the Church in charge of the Elders or Presbyters,—the Presbyterian. It was this Church which purged and cleansed Christianity of the abominations of idolatry and heathenism. It dethroned the pagan Romish High Priest, and broke in pieces the throne of his universal dominion. It destroyed the emblems of idolatry, and restored to the people the word of God. No sooner was this done than the clouds of darkness and barbarism, which had before covered the earth, began to disappear, until now they remain only in those countries where the rule of the Romish hierarchy is not yet completely broken. Need we refer to special incidents in order to verify what I have said ? Is it not well known to you all ? Is it not known to all the world ?

Did Christ ordain a vice-God on earth in the form of a Pope ? Did Christ command a priesthood of monks and cloisterers ? Did Christ ordain the convents, which serve as living sepulchres for women ? Did Christ command the adoration of images, or confessions to priests,

or the compounding of sin by indulgences for money? Are not all these things heathen and pagan? And was not the chief reason for Christ's coming the overthrowing of all these?

Therefore have we the upbuilder Christ as our Central Theme. He is the sure rule and true guide. And all this is made clearly manifest by and through the Presbyterian Church.





CHAPTER XXVI

TRUE MONOTHEISM

Ezra.—The third speaker will be Mr. Bradley.

Mr. Bradley.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: The last two speakers seem to me to have deviated somewhat from our usual manner of discussion.

As I understand the intent of our organisation, it is this : to endeavour, through free and impartial discussion, to get closer to the truth. By this method we believed the truth could be better perceived than by the unaided efforts of each individual.

But, instead of that free and impartial discussion which we had a right to expect, we have listened to defences of well-known religious institutions. One speaker has championed Roman Catholicism, and the other Presbyterianism. And why? Seemingly, because one speaker is a Roman Catholic, and the other a Presbyterian. It is natural for a believer to defend his belief and his sect. But when? Surely only at a time when such defence is called for. Has anyone present given the first speaker cause for his eloquent championship of his church? Did the theme for discussion warrant the second speaker in holding forth as he did? Did they not both speak as sectarians pure

and simple? Will such a method of treating the subject tend to bring us any nearer the truth? Will it not leave us as before, each with his own preconceived opinion? Of what profit then can such discussion be?

I say all this in the kindest spirit possible, and desire only to remind my friends that the aim of our organisation is, indeed, catholicism. Not the narrow catholicism of the Romish hierarchy, but that grandest catholicism which impels the mind to think toward the right and seek the truth. This catholicism it is, which is the manifest distinguishing mark between man and animal. It is this attribute which links and unites us to the All-Father, whom we, for want of a grander word, call God. If this be our aim, shall we lower ourselves to become creedsmen and sect defenders?

Our text is, "What is Our Central Theme, and What Should It Be?" and the text is good. No mariner would care to venture on the high seas without a compass; and no individual or nation can make headway in the ocean of progress unless sailing under the guidance of a Central Theme.

What then should be our Central Theme? We have been told by the two speakers who preceded me that it should be God. But does that answer the question? Baal and Moloch in ancient Syria meant God. God was called "Osiris" in Egypt, "Ormuzd" in Persia, "Odin" in Scandinavia, "Brahma" in India. What difference, therefore, can there be between Christians and pagans, since both believe in God?

"Ah," some one replies, "the name itself is not material; the point is, what does *God* stand for? The nations you name were polytheists, while we are monotheists. The pagans had their good gods and their bad gods, the counterparts of the good. Osiris had his

Typhon, Brahma his Rudra, Ormuzd his Ahriman, and Odin his Loki ; whereas we Christians have but one God."

To this I reply, " And is not the Christianity which now predominates, having three divisions in its Godhead, polytheistic ? Has it not, besides the three Gods, an eternal devil ? Is this monotheism ? Did Christ teach this kind of monotheism ? If he did, can it be shown me from the Scriptures ? "

When Jesus was asked, as we are told in Mark, chapter xii., verses 29, 30, and 31, to make plain what He taught, what did He reply ? " Hear, O Israel : the Lord our God is one God, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Is there any mention of a trinity here ? Is there any mention of an eternal devil ?

Are Catholics and Presbyterians then really monotheists ? Are they not, after all, polytheists, as were their ancestors before them ?

The light of true monotheism, of the one and only God, did indeed shine forth from Zion, and the sages and prophets in Israel were indeed the true messengers of the Most High ; but the sinful people, the Jews, would not receive what was offered them, and they were rejected. Christ came to continue what the prophets had begun, but they rejected Him likewise. And now the predominating sects and creeds call themselves Christians, and claim heirship of Zion and Christ, but have they not dismantled Zion and disfigured Christ ?

Yet there are a few who have the truth, and these few are called Unitarians.

What other phase of belief approximates more nearly

to the teaching of Christ and of the prophets than does Unitarianism? God is indeed One; for how else could He be "The Absolute?" Does not Paul declare Him to be absolute when he speaks of the "fullness of Him who filleth all in all?" There is indeed room in the universe for creatures of whom it may be said, as Paul further declares, "God shall be above all, and through all, and in us all"; but if God is absolute, then is there no room whatever for an additional God or Gods, or for any devil.

Were there three Gods, whether separately three or jointly in one, each would then be a limitation on the other; all would then be conditioned. Each would exist subject to the condition that other Gods likewise exist; hence none of the three, nor the three combined, could then be absolute. There would then be no absolute God at all, for how can that be absolute which is conditioned? And that which is not absolute cannot be God. More than one God would, therefore, render the God-head finite. Belief in the plurality of the God-head is, therefore, belief in finite gods within an infinite universe.

Such were the beliefs of the ancient Greeks and Romans and of all other polytheists. Now of what use are finite gods in an infinite universe? Of no use whatever; for a finite god can never comprehend an infinite universe. If it cannot comprehend, it necessarily cannot govern. Finite gods are, therefore, and necessarily, no gods at all. They simply do not and cannot exist. Finite gods would be as much out of place as absolute unconditioned governors of the universe as an infant would be to guide a ship across the ocean.

God is indeed infinite and absolute, and as such He must be unconditioned. They who represent Him as

three in one, therefore limit Him. Limiting Him, they insult His majesty by worshipping an idol of their own creation. They are idolators pure and simple.

And what is idolatry? Is it not but another name for cruelty, for inhumanity and for brutality? It is such indeed; for what else can it be, deriving, as it does, its origin from the polluted fount of error? As microbes, when introduced into a body weakened by disease, tend to multiply themselves prodigiously, so do wrong beliefs multiply in the mind diseased whenever it is governed by an erroneous Central Theme in religion.

What belief, for instance, can be imagined more savage, more inhuman, and more insulting to the majesty of the most merciful God than that of an eternal hell-fire for the unbaptised child? The cruelty of the North American Indian was insignificant when compared to the cruelty of this diabolical and degrading doctrine. The wonder is not that it was once received, for it was the belief of men of primitive minds. The wonder is that it is still retained in this progressive age, in the beginning of this, the twentieth century. Yet what better result can we expect so long as the Central Theme of the millions is supplied from a polluted source?

Let us hope and pray that the time is near at hand when superstition and error shall diminish and fade away forever, and when mankind shall at last find the One true and only God.





CHAPTER XXVII

THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

Ezra.—The fourth speaker will be Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : I have been much amused, as well as interested, by the remarks of the three speakers who have preceded me. That the subject is not new, in no wise diminishes the interest which attaches to it ; and we may rest assured that the importance of the question under discussion will so force itself upon the inquiring mind as to permit no rest until some satisfactory solution is reached.

If I may be permitted, I will begin my remarks with some narration of my own experiences.

My parents, who lived in Germany, were Lutherans, and in my early boyhood I was brought up under strict religious instruction. I was so apt in learning, and so zealous in matters of faith, that my parents had a mind to have me trained for the ministry. Books on religion were given me, which I eagerly read, and reading and study became my ruling passion. The time came, however, when I sought a broader field of knowledge than could be found in the books given me by my parents. New books, which I craved, I at length succeeded in obtaining ; and with this new reading, this enlarged

field of study, the scales fell from my eyes. I continued my study after coming to this country, and have continued it until now, almost all on the subject of our present discussion.

There are men who assert, directly or by implication, that religion was evolved by interested priests; and that priestcraft, in its operation, was much like a secret monopoly in manufactures, or a system of counterfeiting or smuggling, or some similar device for appropriating the substance of others. I am no believer in this doctrine. It is patent to all of us that in our day, at least, there is no lack of general intelligence; and no man can say that the ministers and priests are wiser than the people they serve. The people realise the value of the priestly services which they receive, and are content with their bargain.

What, therefore, originally caused the demand for religious functions? What but the physical act of dreaming? It was this which caused primitive man to believe that his soul left his body during sleep. And if then, why not in the long sleep,—death? And after death what? Was man to wander forever, alone in spirit-land? Oh, no! he would be too lonely; he needed to be accompanied, as on earth, by his wife, by his children, by his friends, and even sometimes by his faithful dog or favourite horse. And this spirit-land, had it not its principal chieftain, its ruler? Yes; and one with greater power than the chieftains of earth. The great chief of spirit-land must be a god, endowed with attributes of power.

In this simple recapitulation we see the rise and initial development of religion. The same explanation holds for the uncivilised races of the Pacific, the negroes of Africa, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Hebrews,—all!

As conquest swallowed up the smaller tribes, and as these became merged into nations, the means of the ruling chief were increased in proportion. These added resources he employed to increase his power and to heighten his honours. And the agency he used was none other than sacerdotalism. A pompous religious institution served better to promote the stability of his rule, and to multiply his honours, than policemen or soldiers would have served at an equal or greater cost.

At the death of the ruling chief he was deified and became a god, and his successor, when he died, likewise became a god. And as the earthly exploits of the chiefs were retold in story and song, so were the exploits of the heavenly chiefs revealed and told and sung. And specially selected men were maintained and trained to reveal, praise, and interpret these exploits; thus came the scribes, seers, prophets, poets, historiographers, preachers, and priests.

As the chief while on earth had powerful enemies to subdue, so had he in spirit-land the counterpart of his earthly enemies. As the conquered enemy on earth was degraded by his conqueror, so was a region of degradation provided for the spirit enemy in the under spirit-land. And in that under spirit-land, too, a chief enemy was supplied, a devil, in enmity against the chiefs or gods of Heaven. So were created everywhere, by all nations, the generations of gods in the upper and in the under world. And these gods were feared and worshipped by all people.

It sometimes happened that the overthrow of a weak or cruel tyrant by a strong chieftain of more liberal trend tended to build up a new system of belief. These newer systems sometimes assumed the form of nature worship, or worship of impersonal qualities. At other

times they rose high enough to be classed as a philosophy ; such as, for instance, the ancient Vedas, the Zendavesta, the higher interpretations of Greek mythology and of the Hebrew prophets. But now, as in all previous times, the mass of the people demand the gross and concrete in the domain of spirit-land ; and these they will ever continue to demand.

Does Judaism, Christianity, or Mohammedanism show any essential variations in origin from the systems I have spoken of ? Let any unbiassed intelligent person read the Old or the New Testament, or the Koran, and he will quickly discern that one and the very same cause actuated all these productions, as it actuated the rise of all other religious systems.

Fortunately there are two antagonistic forces at work, which must in the end dispel the mental and intellectual darkness which has hitherto prevailed. These forces are the legends and miracles of the Bible and the Koran, on the one hand, and the increased use of machinery on the other. So long as the mass of mankind, in the struggle for existence, depended largely on the fortuitous conditions of changeful nature, so long was there a strong inclination to invoke the assistance of spirit-land. When, however, the mass of the people shall be employed in operating machinery, they will in time perceive how little is the need for belief in supernatural powers. They will learn to have that respect for the ordinary laws of cause and effect which they never had before. Do we not see evidences that they are already awakening to this realisation ?

And as to the legends and miracles of the Bible and the Koran, it is indeed fortunate that these books, as well as the other bibles of the world, have come down to us in the forms in which we find them. Had these

books been revised, with the preposterous miracles eliminated, with the coarse, immoral, cruel, and brutal themes altered to suit the higher standard of to-day, then indeed there would have been a dangerous chance for the perpetuation of error in the Central Theme. But in the form in which they have come down to us they are self-destructive, and must perish by their own weight of folly.

Notwithstanding, we may ask whether it is not safer to acquiesce in existing religious beliefs rather than to tear away the protection which they afford? But would not that be the same as saying, "Is it not better to stifle the agitations of Labour rather than destroy the peace of any unjust capitalist?"

What rewards, what benefits have accrued to the poor deluded worshippers of a spirit-land? Look around, and you will see that those held most closely in the meshes of supernatural beliefs are among the most degraded and unfortunate among men. Behold the Jews! Who among the nations of the earth were more devoted, more loyal, and more enthusiastically attached to this idea than they? Yet what benefit has it ever been to them? How has it profited them that Abraham left his comfortable home in Chaldea, and, forsaking all, founded the peculiar supernatural faith which was to be the source of perpetual misfortune for his descendants? Was not the mission of Moses equally unfortunate? When were the Jews ever free, ever happy, ever prosperous as other nations have been? Are they happy now? Have they not been, are they not, the most unfortunate, the most unhappy people in the whole world?

Pious Christians, and impious ones, too, tell us that the Jews are in misery because they maltreated and

killed Christ ; and we must marvel at the stupidity or the malevolence of these Christians. For if, as they say, Christ was ordained from the beginning to suffer death in order to atone for the sin of Adam, and thereby to become an atonement for us all, and if all this was to have been done in accordance with the Will of the Father, how were the Jews to blame in carrying out this Will of the Father ? Could the Jews have set aside the eternal decrees of an omnipotent God ? Are the Jews to be held responsible for Adam's sin ?

“ But,” say some, “ they condemned Jesus on false testimony.” How so ? Did they accuse Him falsely when they charged that He had proclaimed Himself a part of the God-head ? And did Jesus deny it ? Had He never taught it ? Then indeed were the Jews guilty, but guilty only of the judicial murder of a man. And if the Jews were guilty of this crime, how infinitely greater must be the guilt of Christians who worship this man as a God !

If Jesus was really God Almighty, and became incarnate, and came down to earth in the form of man, to be tried according to the law of the Bible, were not the Jews in full accord with the law, when they condemned Him to death ? Does not that law say, “ If any prophet arise among you and teach other gods, even if he show signs and wonders, him ye shall destroy ” ? Does it not say, “ Thou shalt have no other gods before me ” ? Does it not say, “ The Lord our God is one ” ? Who was it that said all this ? Do not Christians tell us it was the God in whom they believe, the God of the Bible ? If God said this, and meant what He said, what blame can attach to the Jews or their Judges who condemned according to that law, a law which the Jewish and Christian God gave

and commanded to be obeyed? Would the Jews have done better if they had broken God's law?

If the god of whom Moses spoke was really the Almighty God, Ruler of the Universe and just; and if He had a desire to send a part of the God-head upon earth for the purpose of being killed, to atone for the sin of Adam, we should expect Him to have said to Moses about the following: "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Go and speak unto the children of Israel, and tell them that One God means three Gods, and that I am the Father, and beside me are the Son and the Holy Ghost. Three Gods in one shall ye have unto yourselves forever, and they shall be called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the three shall be one forever.'

"And the Lord spake yet again unto Moses, saying, 'Go speak unto the children of Israel, and tell them that in the days of the Roman Empire, when it shall have come, even in the days of Augustus Cæsar, I will send down to the earth, in human form, the third part of the God-head, and He is to be called Jesus, and He is to suffer death, and thus atone for the sin of Adam, in order that all Christians may find atonement through His blood, which shall be shed. But let no son of the children of Israel lay hold on Him to slay Him, or to accuse Him, or to try Him before any Judges in Israel. He must surely die, but not by the hand of any of the children of Israel. By the hand of the Romans shall He die.

" 'And tell thou, moreover, to the children of Israel that on the day when my Son Jesus shall have been slain, then shall they accept and worship Him as God; and they shall in that day put away the Judaism which I have given them, and they are thenceforth no longer

to call themselves Israelites or Jews, but they shall become Christians in honour of my Son Jesus, who shall be crucified by the Romans. And because of this, let all who believe in Him as God be called Christians. And let the House of Israel from that day be called Christian. I have spoken it.' "

Were any such things as these in the Bible, there would be ground for the inhuman treatment which the Jews have received from Christians. But as the law in the Bible stands, how is it possible for the unbiassed, the intelligent, and the just to blame the Jewish Judges for having condemned to death a person charged with a crime so emphatically proven to be capital by the Bible—by that Bible which is acknowledged by all Christians to be the law given by the Christian God himself?

But those who expect religious partisans to be intelligent, unbiassed, and just, are doomed to eternal disappointment. How can we expect unbiassed opinions, equity and justice from believers in a theory which is not itself grounded on justice and equity? As my friend, the third speaker, said, when speaking of idolatry, "And what of idolatry? Is it not but another name for cruelty, for inhumanity and for brutality? It is such indeed; for what else can it be, deriving, as it does, its origin from the polluted fount of error? As microbes, when introduced into a body weakened by disease, tend to multiply themselves prodigiously, so do wrong beliefs multiply in the mind diseased, whenever it is governed by an erroneous Central Theme in religion."

Hatred, persecution and cruelty—all these came with religion. To abolish them we must abolish religion. Our Central Theme is here without it. It is ever present in the eternal laws of Cause and Effect.



CHAPTER XXVIII

GOD THE CAUSE

Ezra.—The fifth speaker is Mr. Quail, the censor of the evening.

Mr. Quail.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : I must beg the indulgence of the club, to permit me to vary somewhat from the usual course of the censor. I find it impossible to proceed otherwise. I therefore ask permission for such deviation, and I present my reason for the unusual request.

I am, as some of you know, a Baptist ; and as a Baptist I feel it my duty to stand up here in defence of the church of which I am a member. But my duty as censor of the evening prompts me to set aside that feeling, and to make my presentation from a point of view which shall permit that freedom and broad catholicity so characteristic of our association. I admit that, had I been the first speaker, I should unhesitatingly have made a presentation for the Baptist Church similar in character to that made to-night for Roman Catholicism. But the impression made by the preceding speakers as a whole has so modified my former and seemingly fixed opinions, that I am sure my presentation will now show marked variations.

Were this discussion on politics, or economics, or conduct, I could think and decide in that free and unhampered condition of mind which lends itself readily to the direction of discussion and to the logic of the occasion. But my reverence for my faith on the one hand, and my strong desire to conform to the usage of our association on the other, have so blurred the line of my intent that I find I am unable to proceed and adhere to the usual course.

For these reasons I ask permission to proceed this evening on that line which seems to me most in harmony with my inclinations.

Ezra.—What is the pleasure of the association?

Mr. Bradley then moved that Mr. Quail be permitted to continue on the line indicated; Mr. Valanti seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Mr. Quail.—We may well hesitate before giving free rein to the imagination, or permitting the undeveloped mind to form conclusions on a subject so vital to us here and hereafter as our faith and religion.

What other possession is so precious, especially to the poor, and more especially to the oppressed and ostracised? In whom can be found the eye that will not turn away, and the heart that will not reject, except in the most blessed Redeemer? If now our shield, our guardian, our guide and our uplifter be taken from us, where shall we find hope, comfort, or consolation? Shall it be, as the fourth speaker has told us, in the law of cause and effect? Do not my people suffer sufficiently as an effect? And is not the effect caused? Surely! Here then are cause and effect. Shall we worship them? Shall we pray to them? Can we, by praying to prejudice, to cruelty, to pride, to insolence, to wrong and to inhumanity, remove them? Yet these

are the causes which make my people suffer. The Law of Cause and Effect may stand sufficient for those who do not need God, for those who do not sin and for those who are not sinned against. But of what benefit can it be to me or to my people?

Our earthly existence is indeed thickly strewn with thorns as it is; but a line and a limitation have been set for our sufferings. That line is religion, and the limitation is the measure of kindness which it engenders. The removal of religion would remove hope and humanity, for it would quickly degrade all to the level of rapacious, ferocious and unpitying wild beasts. Such were the French during the reign of terror, when they cast out God and enthroned a harlot in His place; and such have been all who knew not God.

Which among the peoples of the earth are the most unprogressive and slavish? What others than those who believe in Buddhism? Yet the Buddhist is a believer, and has for his Central Theme the Law of Cause and Effect: the very thing proposed by the fourth speaker.

What therefore is this Cause and Effect, that we should have it as a Central Theme in the place of God? How may we recognise it? How frame it in our apprehensions? Shall we, as did the ancient Greeks, speak of it as a "fortuitous concourse of atoms"? Shall we call it a "rhythmic motion"? Shall we say it is "impelled atoms seeking an equilibrium"? Shall we name it a "plurality of relatives"? Shall we assert that it is "forces seeking the point of least resistance"? And, after all, when we ask—what is an atom, what is motion, what is force, can anyone but God answer? Yet, were anyone able to take up a single grain of sand and read its story aright, he would be able also to

decipher the secrets of creation and of infinity. And can man, finite man, expand his feeble power so as to grasp the secrets of God?

Or shall we say that in the beginning there were fiery particles in equal suspension, and that one of the fiery particles began to move, and thus nebulae were born? That the nebulae, through the laws of gravitation, through motion, became suns? That the suns threw off rings which, by cooling, condensed into planets? That these evolved from themselves organic life? Shall we say all this, and find no difficulty in believing it? Must we not then likewise believe that the mind and the reason with which we are endowed were potentially present at a time before there was a planet, a sun, or a nebula?

And if this mind, this reason, was potentially present, is it not also possible that infinitely greater minds were likewise potentially present? Is it not still more possible and reasonable to believe that beyond and above all phenomena is the unconditioned, absolute, infinite, eternal Noumenon? And is not that Noumenon God? Let those who refuse to accept this natural and reasonable conclusion then tell us by what process, by what links in the chain of cause and effect, we can connect the original impalpable fiery particle with the palpable granite? Why did some of these fiery particles form earth, others metal, and still others thought? Must we not marvel at the huge faith demanded of us in order to accept all this as our Central Theme? How much simpler and more rational is the belief in the omnipotence of the Most High God! Far be it from me, therefore, to reject God, and thus do violence to my reason and my conscience.



CHAPTER XXIX

THE UPLIFTING OF THE NATIONS

Quail (continuing).—It is not my desire to fly from Religion. On the contrary, I would cling closer to it ; and my most earnest hope is that some day, and in this land, the Lord will inspire some among my people to become seers and prophets for all the world, even as were the Jews of old. Does this seem an impossibility ? Will the negro never rise from the dunghill, will he never put aside the tear-stained garments of humiliation ? Shall the All-Merciful God forget to be just to His black children, and shall he reserve His chiefest blessings for those He has created with a white skin ? “ No, a thousand times no ! ” the answer comes to us from God, direct to our hearts. Can Justice be unjust ? And is not God Justice ? We will therefore put our trust in Him, and gird ourselves ready for the great work.

What great work ? This which the discussion has brought forth. Everywhere and at all times man and his neighbour had between them enmity. Christ came and taught them to put away enmity and to take up amity. And Christ freely commissioned all, in His name, to take up His work. And behold, is there not

enmity because of division and diversity in opinion? Cannot some way be found which will remove the cause of division? Surely. And how can we better do Christ's work than by endeavouring to find such a way?

Against this endeavour, let no one urge that there is no room for further development in religion. Is God dead? Did He die with the completion of the last chapter of the Bible? Is He not living even now? Is there not as much need of progress in Religion now as in the past? Cannot God produce seers and prophets in our time, and in this country, as well as He did in days gone by, and in Judea? There are indeed difficulties and stumbling-blocks in the way; difficulties and differences which even a specially trained and conservative clergy find it impossible to remove. To some of these difficulties attention has been directed in our discussion. The fourth speaker pointed to the legends and miracles of the Bible as an evidence of its falsity. I contend that, on the contrary, this very seeming defect gives the Bible its stamp of authenticity.

Supposing, for instance, that someone should bring me a lamp of elaborate workmanship, claiming to have just dug it from one of the Indian mounds of Ohio, and offering it as an evidence of the high civilisation of the ancient American tribes. Supposing, further, that on examination, I found the words "Meriden, patented, 1890," stamped thereon, would not that stamp be sufficient proof against the claim? So with the Bible. The very defects which are urged against it are the strongest evidence that it has come down to us from remote times.

But shall we, for this reason, treat these defects as on a par with the treasures of eternal truth it contains,

which are so evident and so responsive to the spiritual mind? Does not this forced faith in the mingled true and false frustrate the purpose of the whole? Is not this indiscriminating faith the very source of contention and of enmities, of scepticism and of final atheism? Surely! As for development, is it not ever going on? Is it not the will of God? And if development is to go on everywhere and for all time, why then should it not go on in the most exalted of all spheres, in religion? It surely will; and I feel that no earthly power can prevent it. It is in fact going on now, for only the reckless or ignorant preacher will presume, in our day, to shout to his unfortunate listeners stories of eternal damnation or burnings and tortures in an everlasting hell.

Before we ask all men to come to Christ, ought we not to remove the stumbling-blocks in their way? This is fit work for the followers of Christ, especially in view of the wonderful economic, political and social changes which are now going on throughout the world. In this very work a great field is open to my people; for who has more need of amelioration in his circumstances than he who suffers under the evils of present conditions? Can we not most surely earn for ourselves the right to equity, the right to justice, if we work for equity and, through working, accomplish it for all men?

It may be said that we are inferior, incapable; but were the Jews, on their escape from Pharaoh's hands, and fresh from slavery, any better fitted to produce great world-ideas? And when the Jewish captives, brought in chains to Rome, were made to pass under the arch of Titus as a mark of extreme humiliation, how was it then? Had anyone then declared to the proud Emperor that not Rome, but Judea, had conquered, would he not have been laughed to scorn?

Yet Judea had conquered; and all that now remains of Rome, then the mistress of the known world, are a few disfigured pieces of marble and bronze, which might be almost all contained in the museum of the Vatican.

Right in front of the Vatican stands a holy edifice, representative of what was, until within recent times, the Church of Christendom — the Church which even in our day numbers over one hundred and fifty million followers. As we enter this most beautiful House of Prayer, this Church of St. Peter, we look in vain for the statues of Romulus, of Numa, of Tarquin, of the elder Brutus, of Cato, of Julius Cæsar, of Augustus, of Cicero, of Marcus Aurelius, or of the former gods of Rome. Instead, we find at the front, and before the Sanctum Sanctorum, the statues of Isaiah, a Jew; of Jeremiah, a Jew; and, in the centre, those of David, a Jew; of Solomon, a Jew; of Peter, a Jew; of Paul, a Jew; of Mary, a Jewess; and of Jesus, a Jew. And all who come to worship bow reverently before them, offering prayer. And the great bronze statue of Peter shows much wear at the toe, from the many millions who have worn away the bronze by their fervent kisses.

If the Jew has accomplished so much, and for the whole world, shall we not emulate his example? Shall we not endeavour to walk in his footsteps? But much as I wish and hope and desire for my people, for the negro, to accomplish, I seem to have a melancholy foreboding,—to receive an almost intuitive announcement,—that the exalted mission of spiritually uplifting the nations of the earth still further is not to be entrusted to my people. No, nor to any people other than the Jews. I have a presentiment that they, and they alone, are to finish what they so many centuries ago began.

Perhaps this presentiment comes from my impressions of some portions of the Scriptures, wherein it is said that "Salvation is of the Jews," or perhaps it comes from the promises of the revered prophets, so clearly and emphatically set forth. Have not the Jews, ever since their dispersion, cherished this very thought? And centuries of earnest thought on an exalted theme must, in the end, result in the conservation of a power potent enough for exalted ends.

So be it then, so long as the nations and the people of the whole world are to be sharers in the sublime change which shall bring God's rule on earth even as it is in Heaven. May that day speedily come.

Ezra.—The time for adjournment having arrived, it will be necessary to postpone until another occasion any review of the remarks of the several speakers.

Mr. Valanti.—I move that this meeting adjourn until to-morrow night.

The motion was seconded and carried, and the meeting adjourned.





CHAPTER XXX

FOURTH SUMMARY BY EZRA

REPORT of adjourned meeting, Thursday, April
20, 1899, 7.45 P.M.

Ezra.—The Twentieth Century Club will now come to order. Ladies and Gentlemen: This is an adjourned meeting of the club, and it is now in order for me to review the remarks of the several speakers of last night on the subject of “What is Our Central Theme and What Should It Be?” I have been deeply impressed by the several presentations of the subject, and shall refer to them, from time to time, as occasion may require.

We may gather from what has been said that religious development shows several evolutionary stages. We learn that the stages of intuition and inspiration were followed by that of revelation; and these I denominate the original or primary stages in religious development. I desire to complete the list by adding the final evolutionary stage in religious development;—that of reason, derived from experience. The order in which these stages of development have been placed seems reasonable, especially so far as Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism are concerned; for these are religious systems founded on intuition, inspiration, and revelation.

And now, in order that we may proceed intelligently, it is necessary that we have some understanding of what is meant by intuition.

Intuitive ideas seemingly come unbidden and spontaneously. The uncritical are apt to infer that as some persons are fortunate or, as they term it, "lucky," in money affairs, so others are fortunate or "lucky" in their inspired ideas, in their intuitions. It may not occur to the uncritical that such seemingly spontaneous inspirations or intuitions really come to us as a result of the process of generalisation. It may not be understood by them that inspiration is the result, the logical conclusion, of prior thought and experiences stored in the mind.

Nor do they seem to understand that this process of generalisation is much the same as if the mind were to assemble before it as many experiences as possible, and were to separate and sort them into groups, as a judge sorts and separates evidence, from the material part of which a judgment or verdict is to be arrived at. A conclusion reached by this process, when original and acceptable to the mind, is sometimes denominated intuition or inspiration.

Sometimes conclusions seem to come like a flash, spontaneously; but in no case can they come unless the prior thought and experiences which go to form them are present in the mind. Without the presence of prior thought and experiences, and without the consideration of them, both concomitantly, in their relations to one another, and as a whole, there can be no conclusion, no inspiration, no intuition.

We may, for instance, form a fair conception of this idea by observing the operation of a kaleidoscope. On being slowly revolved, a kaleidoscope will form the

pieces of variously shaped and coloured glass into certain fixed combinations or designs. Now each thought stored away in the mind may be represented by each piece of glass in the kaleidoscope. Whenever, then, there is a sufficient quality, quantity and variety of thoughts stored in the mind, and whenever these thoughts are sufficiently and concomitantly blended and adjusted in any given direction, there may follow an original combination within the mind, which, as said before, if new, and if acceptably received, is called inspiration or intuition.

Intuitive ideas may, however, be properly divided into two general divisions : first, those which relate to conclusions within a limited field of concrete experiences ; and, second, ideas which come as a result of the widest possible range of thought and of the highest possible order of generalisation.

Examples of the first class may be seen in the modifications by which the Howe sewing machine has developed into the improved sewing machines now in use. An example of the second may be given in the highly abstract conclusions of the prophets, who, beginning on the level of concrete experiences, generalised these into themes so abstract as to baffle any effort of the mind to connect their conclusions with concrete evidences. The current links in the chain of concrete experience serve to little purpose here. Indeed, the Jewish prophets scarce deemed it necessary to make an attempt to offer proof ; the conclusion of an eternal, infinite, absolute, and unconditioned God once having been divined and cognised by the mind, there was no serious attempt to offer proof in evidence.

And it was well that this was so ; for what proof could have been offered ; and what kind of concrete

chain of evidence could have been submitted which would have stood the test of time and the test of progress? None that could have been offered at that time, as is evidenced by the attempts of the philosophers of Greece, and of the other philosophers of antiquity.

The materialisation of abstract intuitive ideas in a religious system seems to manifest itself in certain stages of development. At first it takes the form of involved symbolism. Changes denominated reforms eventually occur which, in the main, consist in modifications from the highly involved to the less involved forms of symbolism.

The innovation during the time of Ezra the Scribe, mentioned by the second speaker, in the establishment of the synagogue, or House of Assembly, modified the primitive form of Judaism. In contradistinction to the Temple, it was a modification and evolution from the more involved Temple symbolism to the less involved form of simpler prayer houses, or "Houses of Assembly" for prayer. This was further supplemented and emphasised by the labours of the Prophets and Sages of Israel.

Now what has been said here of Judaism is equally true of Christianity. In the beginning this religious system crystallised itself in the involved symbolic forms manifested in Roman and in Greek Catholicism. In course of time, chiefly through the Reformation, it began to be modified from the involved to the less involved form.

The Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic forms which Christianity originally assumed, were, therefore, as natural to Christianity at that time, as was the Temple service to early Judaism. The less involved symbolism of the Protestant churches was likewise as natural an

outgrowth of development in Christianity as the Houses of Assembly were from the Temple service at Jerusalem. In fact, both systems were necessary complements to each other.

Those persons, therefore, who hold the opinion that Christianity should have established itself without Roman or Greek Catholicism, seem to overlook the usual and incidental stages which regularly precede the development of religious systems.

In considering this subject, it may not be out of place to observe two statements usually made in reference to these primitive forms of the predominant churches: One, that they are subversive, and the other, that they are catholic. Both of these statements are false; for instead of being subversive we see, on the contrary, that they are indirectly constructive; instead of being catholic they are largely ethnic. It is true that, through extraordinary efforts,—ofttimes largely coercive,—they may take on a phase of catholicism, but no sooner are these efforts relaxed or removed than they quickly lose the phase of catholicity.

Reverting again to the main subject, we may say that if we admit as true what I have thus far affirmed, it must necessarily follow that Roman and Greek Catholicism were, and are still to some extent, necessary steps in the progress of Christianity. If this be true, it must follow that those who speak disparagingly of the early forms which Christianity assumed, the forms of Roman and Greek Catholicism, cannot have in mind what has just been said.

The remarks of the second speaker bring into relief an important form of procedure in the Houses of Assembly, which arose during the time of Ezra the Scribe. This was the remarkable custom which freely permitted

the members of a congregation, or visiting strangers of the same faith, to occupy the pulpit during the time of religious services for the purpose of expounding the Scriptures. This custom, though long since abolished in the synagogue proper, is still in vogue among the major portion of the Jews of the world ; who, on assembling in what are called " The Houses of Study," ask, expound, and answer Scripture questions. The important results which followed this peculiar mode of procedure were twofold. The freedom of public exposition largely promoted the mental development of the Jews, even after their dispersion, and has continued to do so, to a large extent, among orthodox Jews to the present day.

To this custom also Christianity owes the opportunity for that rapid early development without which its progress would have been materially retarded. It was this which permitted the apostles, the disciples, and the early converts to Christianity to enter the synagogue and, during worship, to occupy the pulpit and expound the Scriptures. The New Testament speaks of many such instances. And it is perhaps worthy of note that this custom is the most remarkable instance of democracy in religion that has ever appeared in a religious system.

The third speaker defines an idolater as a believer who postulates false attributes of God. And is he not correct ? We shall see farther on. The fourth speaker's opinion concerning the rise and development of the God-idea is instructive, and his conclusion as to the sufficiency of the law of Cause and Effect is interesting. The fifth speaker predicates that this country is a possible field for new religious development.

We now take up the definition of idolatry given by

the third speaker. He asserts that believers who postulate false attributes of God are idolaters. Here it may be in order to make some observations on the subject of idolatry. The uncritical will, no doubt, be unfavourably impressed with those portions of the Bible which refer to idolatry and idolaters. The seemingly cruel and inhuman treatment of idolaters, as narrated in the Bible, will be likely to arouse antagonism to the spirit which actuated that treatment. Why should such cruelty, such inhumanity, be hurled against innocent men, women and children, simply because they were possessed of primitive minds, and knew no better than to be idolaters? And this, too, by a religion which claimed to be guided by a just and merciful God, by a religion which claimed to be instituted on the highest ethical plane?

The answer is clear; the cause of this treatment of idolaters was centred in the belief that idolatry was unethical, cruel and inhuman, and therefore as dangerous to the peace and welfare of human existence as is contact with epidemic diseases, or the proximity of unguarded wild beasts and of poisonous serpents. The conclusion, therefore, seemed natural, that whenever this dangerous element could not be converted, or turned from its evil course toward the ethical, it should be utterly destroyed, just as poisonous serpents or wild beasts are destroyed.

"But," some persons may say, "there are to-day idolaters enough, and they are not molested." True; but in the times to which we have referred it was only the worst, most cruel, and most brutal types against which warfare was directed, and no other people of the world developed a more debased, cruel, and brutal type of idolatry than did the ancient inhabitants of Syria.

Were the idolatry of Baal and Moloch to be re-established on any part of the globe to-day as it existed in Syria at the time we speak of, there would soon be aroused a spirit of hostility toward it as fully pronounced as that in the days of old.

Nor must we conclude that modern idolatry is less antagonistic to spiritual and social progress than were the ancient idolatrous systems. While modern forms of idolatry may not display that active and offensive antagonism which the ancient Syrian systems showed, they nevertheless exert a most powerful deteriorating influence, which is highly detrimental to peace and progress. If this be true, it must necessarily follow that every effort should be made to convert the idolaters and to abolish idolatry.

And right here it is proper again to call into direct question the assertion of the third speaker. He claimed that all those believers who postulated false attributes of God were idolaters. Let us examine this statement carefully ; for, if it be true, it will lead to an important conclusion.

If God is infinite, His attributes must likewise be infinite. But we, who are finite, can have no adequate or true conception of the infinite ; therefore we can have no true or adequate conception of the attributes of God, especially of such as are put forth in an affirmative manner.

If our belief is centred in God, of whom we postulate attributes foreign to or varying from the truth, are we then in effect addressing ourselves to the God of truth at all ? And if we are not, must it not follow that such belief is idolatry, and that such believers are idolaters ? It certainly must so follow. Therefore, as we can have no absolute knowledge of the infinite, we must, in order

to avoid idolatry, rigorously abstain from postulating any attributes of God in an affirmative manner.

What should not be done affirmatively may, however, be done in a negative manner. For example, instead of saying that God is just or merciful, we should say that God cannot be unjust or unmerciful. That this distinction involves a most important truth may not be evident to those who pass it over without serious consideration. Only after it has thoroughly impressed itself on the mind will its importance be recognised. Only then can we properly understand how idolatry may be avoided.

But would not acceptance of this proposition leave the Jew without his Judaism, the Christian without his Christianity, and the Mohammedan without his Mohammedanism? Would it not simply destroy Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism? To this we may reply that such a result need not necessarily follow; for the operation of this principle would only remove from each of these religious systems an idolatrous feature,—a feature which is, without a doubt, the cause of almost all the political, economic and social evils on the earth. We may likewise properly assert that almost all sorrow and suffering in the world came through believers who postulated false attributes of God.

That this may the more clearly be apprehended as a truth, we may, as an illustration, ask “What beside design, material, tools and labour, was necessary in the construction of St. Peter’s Church at Rome?” And the answer is, “The plumb, the level, the square and the compass.” Without these essentials, or with these in an imperfect form, there could have been no St. Peter’s Church, no Capitol building at Washington.

Now what a false level, a false plumb, a false square

and a false compass are in building, such is the postulating of false attributes of God in religion, with its reflex action on the social structure. By attributing a false justice as an attribute of God, the Mohammedan vindicates himself in a line of conduct which embodies a false justice toward Christians, Jews and pagans. The same may be said of the conduct observed toward those of different faiths by Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Brahmins, and by adherents to all other religious systems that have ever existed, or that now exist. The same may be said of the false justice of Mohammedan toward Mohammedan, of Christian toward Christian, of Jew toward Jew, and of pagan toward pagan. The world is still idolatrous, and it is punished for its idolatry by pain, sorrow, poverty and premature death. Such is the fearful and terrible penalty for postulating false attributes of God.

If we are then to dismiss from our minds those affirmative attributes which heredity and long personal experience have ingrained in our consciousness, will not this change drive God out of our minds altogether, will it not engender atheism? No; that should not, indeed cannot, follow, for God is manifest too clearly to be dismissed from the human mind. The laws which surround us, unchanging and infinite, we know are here, ever present; we know and feel that they cannot err. We realise that they cannot be partial in their operations; they cannot be unjust; they cannot be set aside. And what are these laws but the manifestations, the messengers, the agents, of God?

And is it not our chief business on earth to study these manifestations? It is, indeed: with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our might. This law of God, so manifested, it is, then, which is the eternal

“Torah,” the eternal law which the Universal Father gave unto all of His children, to observe and to follow. This eternal “Torah,” this everlasting Law, we can observe and study in the plants, in the rocks, in the waters, in the air, in the planets, and in the suns. We can decipher this sublime God-given Law in astronomy, in chemistry, in biology, in social science, in physiology, in psychology, in customs, in modes of conduct, and in every kindred department of knowledge essential to human progress, interest and happiness.

Happily, the time has now at last arrived when we may safely enter this very Second Stage in the evolution of Religion ; the stage of experience and of reason. Fortunately, the matter, the object, the subject, the Bible, for this new stage is here. It is in the earth, in the air, in the water, and in the sky — everywhere.

It has been suggested that this country should aim to be the primary field for the development of this evolutionary phase of religion ; and the suggestion is a proper one. If Judea, surrounded on all sides by cruel, debased idol-worshippers, was yet able to evolve the first great stage of religious evolution, how much more possible will it be for this country to evolve the second grand stage ! The accomplishment of such a work would indeed fitly supplement this nation’s materialisation of its initial labours. Our country has already brought man near to Liberty ; let it now bring him near to God.

This work, it seems then, must be done before reforms in government, in political economy and in social science can be expected. The time to begin is now ; for the dawn of the Twentieth Century is near at hand. Let us therefore greet this new work with that joy which should usher in the MESSIANIC AGE,—the epoch

when all humanity, joined hand in hand, shall see in every man a brother, and in God the self-same Father.

At the conclusion of the remarks by Ezra, Mr. Moore arose and said :

Mr. President and Gentlemen : I have listened with astonishment to the remarkable conclusions just presented by our worthy President. I wish it understood that I most emphatically dissent from his views. He has seemingly put forward a scheme of rationalistic atheism to take the place of revealed religion, and has clothed his theories in plausible argument. I now ask whether, at the next regular meeting, the President is willing to enter into a debate with me on the subject.

Ezra replied: I am willing.

Mr. Valanti then arose and said: I would amend Mr. Moore's request by suggesting that all members who desire be permitted to take part in the debate, and this amendment I now put in the form of a motion.

The motion was seconded and carried, and the meeting adjourned.





CHAPTER XXXI

MANIFEST IN DIVERS WAYS

A FEW days later I received the following letter from my uncle :

“ PHILADELPHIA, April 23, 1899.

“ *Dear Joseph* : I am obliged to you for sending me the report of the Twentieth Century Club's meeting of last Wednesday night. You ask for my comments, and I make the following :

“ In the first place, there appears to be some improvement in style over the previous efforts of the speakers, and in this respect they show the results of their experience. Second, the culture of the men seems to be in a state of transition ; too high for ordinary workingmen, yet not high enough for the exalted theme they have chosen as a subject. Third, the discussion is on the whole commonplace, ending, as all such discussions usually do, in no tangible results. Each of the speakers seems to have defended his particular religious faith, crying down all the rest. No authority is quoted by any of the speakers to sustain his assertions, and no general conclusion was deduced from the whole.

“ For these reasons, I fail to see any special merit in the discussion. If, however, it interests you so far as to lead you to make more extended and thorough inquiry for yourself, then has it served you to good purpose.”

“ I do not think,” Dorothy said, when she had read this letter, “ that Uncle Harry's criticism is final and

conclusive. I think he read the report too hurriedly to give it the criticism it deserves. He says, for instance, that no general conclusion was deduced from the whole. I am sure there was a general conclusion by Ezra ; sufficiently general to draw out from Mr. Moore the challenge for a debate. Do you remember ? ”

“ Yes,” I replied ; “ but Uncle Harry did not know of that. I sent him only the report of Wednesday’s meeting, which did not include the remarks of Ezra, or the challenge for the debate.”

“ When he returns, then,” said Dorothy, “ he will have an opportunity to read Ezra’s reply, and his opinion may be modified. So that it might be best to postpone our own discussion of the subject until he can take part in it.”

Accordingly the matter was thus disposed of for the time being.

The following Saturday my uncle returned. I then repeated to him the substance of our conversation, and handed him the additional report of the adjourned meeting.

In the evening, when we were all assembled in the library, my uncle opened the subject by saying : “ This additional report corrects one criticism made in my comments to Joseph. I now see that there was a general conclusion. In my hurried reading of the report sent me, I failed to observe that there was to be an adjourned meeting, or I should have surmised a summary.”

“ And what is your opinion now, Henry ? ” asked my aunt.

“ My opinion,” my uncle replied, “ is that this man Ezra is a pronounced crank.”

“ What is that opinion based on ? ” said Dorothy.

"On his conclusion," answered my uncle.

"Would you mind stating the foundations of your opinion a little more fully, Uncle Harry?" I inquired.

"Not at all. The fact that this man is a crank is clearly evident. First of all, surely no one, not even he himself, will claim or can claim that this conclusion has come to him as the result of Revelation. Revelation may only come through the Elect, the chosen of God. But will anyone, will this man himself, declare that he has been inspired by God to speak what he did? And even if he should so proclaim, who would be foolish enough to believe him? Would you? Or I? Has not the day of special revelation passed? Is it not, then, great impiety for a mere workingman, in our day, to imply, even indirectly, that God has given him a new Revelation? Is it not impiety? Is it not an absurdity? And if no claim of Revelation is made by him, what then? Can a day-labourer evolve a plan calculated to accomplish what has, up to now, been impossible of accomplishment?"

"Does not a stone thrown upward fall to the ground? Does the earth fall to the stone? Let some Divine Power cause the stone to become heavier and larger than the earth, and the earth will fall to the stone. Shall the whole world of scholars, teachers and thinkers, therefore, bend the knee and bow the head to the president of a petty workingman's club? Is it not more in harmony with the order of things that this day-labourer bow his head and bend his knee to his superiors,—to those infinitely higher than he, or I, or all of us?"

"If this man is right, was not Abraham wrong? If he is right, what becomes of the teachings of Moses, David, Isaiah, Micah, Jesus and Paul? Is not the

very consideration of the question blasphemous? Is it not a sin against the Holy Ghost? I am not surprised at the stand of Mr. Moore, for had I been present at the meeting, I, too, should have felt it a duty to rebuke this Ezra by challenging his crude assertions."

"It seems to me," my aunt observed, "that there is some merit in what he said about idolatry, is there not?"

"Well, yes," said my uncle. "I am not so much opposed to his statements of fact as I am opposed to his conclusions. But even here he said nothing original. The Protestant churches have opposed idolatry right from the start. The very name, 'Protestant,' means a protest against Romanism, and Romanism is, as you know, synonymous with idolatry."

"How is that?" I remarked. "Was not his statement original? He seemed to call all existing systems of religion idolatrous, and in doing so he must have included Protestantism."

"What of it?" replied my uncle. "Need we pay any attention to what a crank says?"

"But what he said seemed so reasonable," persisted Dorothy.

"Reasonable!" my uncle exclaimed. "How do you know what is reasonable in religion? If professed theologians, of the highest standing, find it almost impossible to determine just what is reasonable in religion, how is it possible for you to determine?"

"I am sure," said Dorothy, thoughtfully, "that I should not care to believe in an unreasonable religion."

"Who asks you to?" my uncle answered.

"Your attitude hardly seems consistent," Dorothy remarked. "You first tell me that theologians of the

highest standing find it almost impossible to determine what is reasonable in religion, and then you would have me believe that religion is reasonable. If learned theologians cannot tell, how can you tell?"

"Because," my uncle replied, "I believe that God, through Revelation, gave us a reasonable religion. But God did not stop to reason the matter over with us. He just commanded, and it is our duty to obey. We must take what He said on faith, and believe and act without doubt or question."

"I fully agree with Mr. Morton," said my aunt. "God did not reveal to us a system of philosophy. He simply gave us a rule of conduct and a faith."

"What is your impression, Uncle Harry," asked Dorothy, "of Ezra's definition of inspiration?"

"Oh, well," said my uncle, "it is all right in its way, but it is by no means original. A potato dealer can, of course, generalise better on the subject of potatoes than a paperhanger can; we all know that. But it does not necessarily follow that a potato dealer is therefore any nearer spiritual light than a paperhanger is, does it?"

"I confess that the whole subject is far from clear in my mind," Dorothy replied.

"Well," pursued my uncle, "which would be your choice? On the one hand, you have the Bible, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and my opinion. On the other, you have the word of this day-labourer, this president of a workingman's club; and he does not even quote a single authority. Now, which will you take?"

"I think," she answered slowly, after a pause, "that I should choose the former."

"That 's right!" exclaimed my uncle, heartily.

"Answered just as I expected my dear Dorothy to answer. And now," he continued, "since we have settled this question, tell me something about the charity organisation you were about to form when I left the city."

"It is formed at last," Dorothy replied, "and the matter is in definite shape. Aunt Barbara and I have busied ourselves about it during the past few days, and we had intended to inform you to-night of what has been accomplished. The Committee has organised, with Mr. Fisher as chairman, Miss Selner as secretary, and Mrs. Bradley as inspector, and I am to be treasurer."

"But I thought the members we first spoke of were to constitute the Committee, and to take entire charge of work and money," I said.

"They would not have it so," said Dorothy; "and Aunt Barbara favoured the final arrangement."

"Yes," added my aunt, "I favoured it after I had heard it discussed. In substance, the Committee did not care to handle so large a sum of money, — a sum larger than any of them had ever before had at their disposal. Then it was suggested that this work would give Dorothy some new and valuable experience. And the members of the Committee, being strangers to us, did not believe that we were justified in placing so much confidence in them. They seemed to think that the proposed arrangement would be the one most satisfactory to all.

"Mr. Fisher suggested, also, that on all important cases you or Joseph be consulted. For all practical purposes, however, the Committee is now in working order, and Dorothy and I have already turned over to the treasury our several contributions."

I went to my desk, drew a check for five hundred dollars, and offered it to Dorothy. "Here, Mrs. Treasurer," said I, "here is my contribution. Please give me your acknowledgment."

She took the check. "This is your receipt," she said, as she imprinted a kiss upon my cheek.

"There is one point," observed my aunt, "that has escaped our attention. This work of charity is to be done by the Committee for us; but no compensation has been offered. We have not even allowed them anything for car-fare."

"That is true," said Dorothy. "The Committee should be seen, and the omission supplied."

"We might send a note to the secretary," my aunt suggested, "asking her to call here Monday afternoon. Then we can talk the matter over with her."

"I will write to her," said Dorothy.

My uncle arose, went to his desk and opened it. "I am inclined to think well of this scheme," he said. "I like the conservative tendency of these people. And I see no objection to Dorothy's being treasurer, provided the fact is kept secret. It will give her experience, and may prove a safeguard to the work of the Committee. So Fisher wanted me to pass on the more difficult cases, did he?" my uncle continued, after a moment's pause, as he seated himself, drew out his check-book, and began to write. "Well, I'll think it over. Here is my contribution, Mrs. Treasurer."

On Sunday morning Dorothy and I went to church. The minister delivered an excellent sermon, taking his text from 1st Corinthians xii., verses 4 and 9. I noticed that during the sermon Dorothy seemed much interested. After the conclusion of the service, as we descended the church steps and began our homeward

walk, she repeated, as if to herself, "For to one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit ; to another faith by the same spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit. . . . But it is the same God which worketh all in all."

"That was the text, was it not?" said I.

"A portion of the text," she replied, "and it has made plain to me what was before obscured and hidden."

"What was that?"

"I will tell you. You may remember my reply to Uncle Harry's question last night. Somehow, I could not tell why, there rose within me then a spirit of rebellion and dissent. I could not help thinking that your uncle's reasoning bordered on sophistry ; yet I could not tell how or why. The arguments he used were not new or startling, and I had often heard them before. In fact, you and I have heard them from infancy, in the Sabbath-school, in the home, and in the church ; but at no other time have they aroused in me that feeling—shall I call it antagonism?—which was produced last night.

"After you all left the room, the thought came to me that, in answering as I did, I had done violence to the spirit of fairness and justice. As I was writing the letter to Miss Selner, I noticed on your desk the report of the last club meeting. I read over Ezra's remarks, and they made a powerful impression upon me ; even more powerful than they had made at the meeting. Finding Uncle Harry's letter of comment pinned to the last sheet, I read it again, and could not help observing the great difference in the impressions produced upon me by the expressions of the two men. The words of

Ezra seemed to find a natural, normal correspondence with my frame of mind.

“Uncle Harry’s criticism, however, together with his language of last night, reminded me strongly of the reasoning employed by the Pharisees when they argued against Christ. I was troubled in mind ; but I could not exactly fix the cause of my trouble. To-day’s text has thrown a ray of light on the matter, for the Scripture which we have just heard tells us plainly that God makes Himself manifest to us in divers ways : to some through wisdom, to others through knowledge, to others through the gifts of healing, and yet to others through faith. What if the spirit manifests itself to Uncle Harry through faith: is it not natural for him to suppose that it must manifest itself to me in the same way ? But I see clearly that, before I can have faith, I must first have that perfect confidence which will produce faith. As yet there is something lacking,—I am without the foundations for that confidence. How can I have faith, then? While Uncle Harry’s arguments seem invincible, and while I cannot answer them, they nevertheless fail to bring me the faith I so much desire. To-day’s text and the words of the minister supply the reason. I still feel that I have not yet found the path that will lead me to spiritual rest ; but I perceive there must be such a path, and this knowledge gives me hope.”

“These same ideas have, in some vague form, passed through my own mind, Dorothy,” I replied. “I cannot disapprove of your dissent from last night’s answer to my uncle, for our first duty seems to me to be honesty to ourselves ; anything else must dwarf the soul and stunt the mind. How would you like to take up, with me, the study of faith, and to continue it until we are able to reach conclusions that satisfy us ? ”

“ I should be so very happy to do so, Joseph ! ” answered Dorothy, eagerly. “ Nothing would give me more pleasure than for both of us to take up that study.”

It was therefore agreed that we take up the study of religion ; and for this purpose we set aside several hours each day.





CHAPTER XXXII

THE MESSIAH

MY uncle's business affairs still demanded his presence in Philadelphia, and it seemed likely that he would be detained there for two weeks longer. He accordingly left us again by the afternoon train, accompanied by my aunt, who welcomed the opportunity of visiting her friends in that city.

After my uncle and aunt had taken their departure, Dorothy and I began to look over some books preparatory to beginning our study of religion. On Monday afternoon we were engaged in this work when Miss Selner was announced.

"I am very glad to see you," said Dorothy, as Miss Selner entered the library, "and I hope it was not too much trouble for you to call to-day. But we wanted to arrange for some compensation to the Committee. That matter had somehow escaped our attention hitherto."

"Thank you very much," replied Miss Selner, "but I require no compensation, nor do I think the others will; but I will bring your offer before them, if you desire."

"Do so, please," Dorothy said.

Miss Selner rose to go. "You seem to be deep in literary research," said she, smiling.

"Yes," Dorothy answered, "my husband and I are about to begin the study of religion."

"An interesting study," remarked Miss Selner; "in fact the most interesting of all studies."

"Have you given much time to it?" asked Dorothy.

"Yes," she replied, "as much as I could spare from my other duties."

"Oh, do stay a while," said Dorothy. "I should so like to have your assistance in outlining our course of study."

"Let me join in my wife's request," I added.

Miss Selner, thus urged, seated herself at the table, and took up, one by one, the books which we had selected from the shelves. "You seem to have just about the right books," she said. "You should have a concordance and some commentaries; otherwise you have enough for the present."

"When did you begin this study, Miss Selner?" Dorothy asked.

"I hardly remember. My parents were orthodox Jews, and, as is customary, we took up the study in early childhood. My brother Ezra studied the commentaries at thirteen years of age."

"What commentary?" inquired Dorothy.

"It was in Hebrew, by Maimonides."

"In Hebrew? A boy of thirteen?" Dorothy observed in surprise. "How extraordinary! No doubt your own studies would seem to me equally unusual. You are very kind to allow us to benefit by them. Let me begin by asking a question. Do you believe in the Messiah?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that He has come, or do you believe that He is yet to come?"

"I believe that He has come, and that He will come again."

"Oh, then you are a Christian," remarked Dorothy.

"No," replied Miss Selner, "not in the sense in which that word is generally used."

"Won't you explain?" said Dorothy, earnestly.

"Christians believe, as I understand," Miss Selner answered, "that God became incarnate; and Jews, from the days of Abraham to the present day, reject the incarnation theory."

"But is it a theory?" asked Dorothy. "Is n't it a fact?"

"The Jewish people reject it as a fact. The belief in an incarnate god has prevailed at all times, and among all the nations of the world, excepting only the people of Israel. This people protested against that belief, and they continue to protest against it to the present day."

"Why?"

"Because they think such belief is idolatrous; they believe that God is Spirit without form; that form can no more be God than a photograph of a person can be a person."

"But," continued Dorothy, "cannot this Spirit take up its abode in a human form?"

"No," replied Miss Selner; "we Jews do not think so. Form is finite, and God is infinite. We believe that God is the only entity, and that all other things are simply form, symbols of the will of God."

"Still, was it not possible," Dorothy persisted, "for a part of the Godhead to come upon earth, and take on the human form?"

"We Jews do not think so," Miss Selner answered. "We do not believe that God is divisible, for that would make Him finite."

"But was it not necessary," pursued Dorothy, "for God to suffer death in order to make atonement for the sin of Adam, and thus to open a path of salvation for mankind?"

"No, we Jews do not believe that God is ruled by necessity; for if God were compelled to obey a law of necessity, it would make the law of necessity mightier than God."

"Then what do the Jews believe God to be?" asked Dorothy.

"They believe Him to be purely spiritual," replied Miss Selner; "infinite, absolute, unconditioned, and incomprehensible to us in His essence."

"If He is incomprehensible," Dorothy observed, "how can you say that He is infinite or absolute or unconditioned?"

"Because, while we may not know the quality of His essence, we know for a certainty that He is infinite as to time and space; for, no matter how hard we try, we can not rid our minds of this idea. If God is, therefore, infinite as to time and space, He must necessarily be unconditioned, therefore absolute."

"Is that not the theory of some of the modern philosophers?" Dorothy asked.

"Yes," replied Miss Selner, "and of many poets and writers of the highest rank; but it was the conception of God held by the Jewish prophets and sages, and has so come down to us to the present day."

"What you tell us surprises me," I observed. "Do you mean to say that this highly abstract philosophy forms the basis of the religion of the Jews? Do the uneducated, the illiterate among you, have these things taught them?"

"You may judge for yourself," she said. "Allow

me to take a sheet of paper, and I will write down two prayers which are repeated daily by about ninety per cent. of all the Jews in the world."

Going to my desk, at my suggestion, she seated herself, took pen and paper, and wrote rapidly for a few moments. Then, rising, she said, "Here is one. While you read it I will write the other."

Dorothy took the paper, read, and handed it to me. It was as follows :

"Let the living God be magnified and praised ; he exists, and there is no period to his existence.

"He is unity, and there is no unity like unto his unity ; he is concealed, yea, also there is no end to his unity.

"He hath no bodily likeness, nor is he corporeal ; his holiness is incomputable.

"He was the antecedent to every thing which was created ; he is the first, and there is no beginning to his beginning.

"Behold, he is the Lord of the Universe, to all that is formed ; shewing his magnificence and his kingdom."

"Here is the other prayer," said Miss Selner. I took the paper and read :

"Universal Lord ! who the sceptre sway'd,
 Ere creation's first wond'rous form was framed :
 When by his will divine, all things were made,
 Then — King, Almighty, was his name proclaim'd !
 When all shall cease, and this world's system o'er,
 Then He tremendously alone will reign :
 Who was, who is, and will evermore
 In most refulgent glory still remain
 Sole God ! unequall'd and beyond compare,
 Without division or associate ; —
 Without commencing date, or final year —
 Omnipotence is his, and regal state.
 He is my God, my living Redeemer,
 My shelt'ring rock in a distressed hour ;
 My refuge, my standard, and protector,

My lot's disposer when I seek his power.
 Into his hands my spirit I consign,
 Whilst wrapt in sleep, and when again I wake :
 And with my spirit my body I resign —
 The Lord's with me, no fears my soul shall shake."

"In these prayers," said Dorothy, "there seems to be a strain of weirdness, a something almost uncanny. There seems to be a sort of far-away metaphysical, philosophical repellancy about them. They do not seem to bring me nearly as close to God as do the Christian hymns. They seem to be prayers that a Herbert Spencer might have written."

"Yet this very same strain you will find running through the poems of Wordsworth, Browning, Lowell, Bryant and Longfellow; and in the essays of Emerson," Miss Selner replied.

"Now, to come back to a former subject," said Dorothy: "you have not made yourself quite clear to me. At the beginning of our conversation I understood you to say that you were a believer in the Messiah, that you believed He had come, and would come again."

"You are right," answered Miss Selner; "and had not the conversation turned in another direction, I should have told you what I meant. Briefly, then, I do not interpret the word Messiah to mean "God incarnate." I interpret it as meaning "the anointed one." We are told in the Bible that God called Cyrus, the Persian, a Messiah, because he liberated the Jewish people. We may thus infer that Messiah means anyone who liberates or elevates the people."

"Well, then," remarked Dorothy, "if that is a true definition of the word, we shall be obliged to say that Luther and Wycliffe and Huss were Messiahs."

"And so they were," Miss Selner replied.

"And if they, why not Washington, Franklin, Jefferson and Lincoln?"

"They also."

"And if they, why not the great poets, the great writers, the great artists, and the great inventors?"

"They also."

"And if they, why not Socrates, Pythagoras, Seneca, Epictetus, Zoroaster, Sakya-muni, Confucius and Mohammed?"

"They also."

"And Jesus?" asked Dorothy.

"Yes, Jesus, and Paul, and John the Baptist."

"Is such the belief of the Jewish people?" I inquired.

"No," she replied: "only of some. The Jewish people," she continued, "have always been divided on the interpretation of the Messianic idea; some have thought the Messiah was to come as a conqueror, to establish at Jerusalem an earthly kingdom of superlative splendour and renown. Others believed that there was to be no personal Messiah, but that there was to come a Messianic Age. Others again believe—and among these are my brother Ezra and I—that those are Messiahs who achieve greatness in liberating the people, who, by their power, remove error and bring forth a clearer conception of truth."

"If those are Messiahs," said Dorothy, "then why are not all such as live upright lives in any station of life?"

"They are Messiahs," replied Miss Selner; "for God is Harmony, Justice, Equity, and Love; and all who imitate Him, who copy Him after this fashion, are His chosen, His anointed, His elect, and His Messiahs."

"The multiplication of such Messiahs, then," concluded Dorothy, "is your highest conception of spiritual development, is it not?"

"Yes, that is my belief. And now," she continued, rising, "it is high time for me to be going. I had not intended to remain so long. And, bidding us "good-afternoon," she took her leave.

"What is your impression, Joseph?" asked Dorothy, after Miss Selner had left.

"I can hardly tell," I replied. "It is all new and strange to me. I think that we would better go on with our study as we had planned. Perhaps later we may be better able to form an opinion."

"Perhaps," said Dorothy.

We continued our study with but little interruption, and soon completed a somewhat hasty reading of the books we had selected. Having then reached no conclusion satisfactory to ourselves, we found it necessary to retrace our steps, and to reconsider, more critically, what we had read.

We were still deep in the study of religion when, on Tuesday morning, May 16th, I received a message from Ezra. He informed me that, in view of the prolonged discussion which would be likely to follow the debate, the club had decided to postpone its meeting until Saturday, May 20th, when debate would begin at one P.M., and discussion terminate at six. A second, or adjourned meeting would take place on the Sunday following, within the same hours. We were desired to attend on both occasions; and as we were glad of the opportunity to be present, I so notified Ezra in reply.

Accordingly, on Saturday Dorothy and I proceeded, at the appointed time, to the place of meeting.



CHAPTER XXXIII

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

REPORT of debate, The Twentieth Century Club, New York, May 20, 1899. Meeting called to order at 1 P.M., all members present.

Ezra arose, and, having called the meeting to order, said, "In accordance with the resolution passed at the last meeting, the usual mode of procedure will be dispensed with to-day. And if there is no objection we will begin the debate by permitting Mr. Moore to proceed."

Moore.—I stated at the last meeting that the president had seemingly advocated a scheme of rationalistic atheism. I wish to be informed if I am correct in my inference.

Ezra.—You are not.

Moore.—Did you not advocate the worship of nature instead of the worship of the God of revelation?

Ezra.—I do not think I did. At all events, I do not do so now.

Moore.—I am very glad to hear you say that, for I was under the impression that you had.

Fisher.—So was I.

Quail.—And I.

Ezra.—Will Mr. Moore please tell me why he had that impression?

Moore.—Certainly. You said, “The time has at last arrived when we may safely enter the second stage in the evolution of religion, the stage of experience. And, fortunately, the matter, the object, the subject, the Bible for this new field is here. It is in the earth, in the air, in the water and in the sky — everywhere.” Is not all this nature worship?

Ezra.—Do you draw your conclusion from these remarks alone, or from all I said?

Moore.—Are not these sufficient?

Ezra.—By no means.

Moore.—Did you not advocate the worship of nature in the place of revelation?

Ezra.—As you have a full report of what I said, will you please indicate the language in which I advocated what you say?

Moore.—Is it not plainly enough stated in what I have quoted?

Ezra.—And I again ask, do you draw your conclusions from those remarks alone, or from all I said?

Moore.—No, not from those remarks alone, but from others, for you likewise said, “And is it not our chief business on earth to study these manifestations? Surely, and with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our might. This it is which is the eternal ‘Torah,’ the eternal law, which the Universal Father gave unto all of His children, to observe and to follow. This is the eternal ‘Torah,’ the everlasting Law, which we can observe and study, made manifest to us in the plants, in the rocks, in the waters, in the air, in the planets and in the suns. We can decipher the God-given Law in astronomy, in chemistry, in biology, in

social science, in physiology, in psychology, in customs, in modes of conduct, and in every other department of kindred knowledge, knowledge essential toward human progress, human interest and human happiness." Is not all this nature worship ?

Ezra.—It is not.

Moore.—What, then, did you advocate ?

Ezra.—I advocated, and advocate now, the worship of God.

Moore.—I should be glad to have you give me a more specific idea of what is involved in your proposition — an outline, for instance, of the form, ceremonial, church, holidays, etc.

Ezra.—A mere outline can, of course, give but a feeble comprehension of the idea ; and, in a debate like this, it would be unfair for any one speaker to consume more than a just share of the time.

Bradley.—I think that under the circumstances the president should be given all the time he may require.

Moore.—I agree.

Ezra.—I shall try to be as brief as I can. Indeed, I could not at this time enter into minute details even if I desired, as these things are not yet fixed in my mind as plainly as I could wish.

To begin with, under this system, the place of public worship should be in a suitable building, constructed about as follows : The visible foundation should be of such stones, and so tiered, as to represent the strata of the earth, showing the various geologic periods. The dome should have a glass roof, movable, and so arranged that the heavenly bodies could be seen. Great lenses and telescopes and other scientific apparatus should be provided for use on special occasions. Orreries, movable and

stationary, should be so arranged as to be in view in front of the worshippers.

The altar should be quite large, as large as the stage of a theatre ; and, on certain occasions, should be arranged like a stage, with scenery and appropriate objects. On this stage should be a series of arches containing slabs of stone or other material, on each of which should appear the name of some world-renowned benefactor. The centre arch should bear the names of the prophets of the world ; among whom, for instance, are to be included such men as Moses, Sakya-Muni, Buddha, Isaiah, Zoroaster, Ezra, Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Jesus, Paul, Micah, Mohammed, Augustine, Maimonides, Ambrose, Francis, Savonarola, Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Swedenborg, Fox and Channing.

Other arches should bear the names of the world-renowned artists, the men of science, writers and musicians ; and on yet another should appear the names of eminent teachers of social science.

In front of the speaker, and above him, is to be suspended a cross with six points, each point terminating in a dimly burning light, to indicate that space cannot limit God. The minister's pulpit is to be a hemisphere, symbolic of the globe or the globular form. Behind the minister are to be seats : for the principal magistrates, for a teacher of social science, an architect, a musician, a scientist, a school teacher and a physician. At one end is to be a seat for a farmer, at the other a seat for a labourer. Each of the chairs should be symbolical in construction, and appropriate.

The music is to be by organ and orchestra, and the choir is to be composed of artists. The people are to join in prayer and in singing.

Above the arches on the altar, and extending outward in a semicircle, is to be an illuminated inscription reading, "My House shall be a House of Prayer for All Nations." A similar inscription shall likewise be placed in front of the building, above the first story.

The interior and the exterior shall be decorated with paintings and sculpture representing the principal historic events in the world — all in relation to the elevation of man.

At the right and at the left sides of the minister shall be plants, and before him shall be a glass tube containing water, and a clod of earth.

Arches, similar to those on the altar, shall be on the exterior. Statues of those persons renowned throughout the world in religion, in the sciences, in the arts and in government are to be placed in the interior and on the exterior.

The building is to be called THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL.

On every festival each worshipper is to wear a wreath on his or her head, of leaves or evergreens in winter, and of flowers in spring and summer.

The festivals shall be as follows :

The first day of each week ; when no work shall be done except by such as minister to the wants of those who observe the festivals or by such as officiate in the service of the church. These shall observe the last day of the week, and shall be served and ministered unto by those who observe the festival on the first day.

In addition there shall be the following general festivals :

January the first shall be the Festival of New Year.

April the tenth shall be the Festival of Emancipation.

May the first shall be the Festival of Flowers.

September the tenth shall be the Festival of Harvest.

October the fifteenth shall be the Day of Pardon and Atone-
ment.

November the twentieth shall be the Festival of the Laws of
God.

The weekly festivals shall be as follows :

The festival of the

First week in January shall be Earth Day.

Week following shall be Stone Day.

Third week shall be Water Day.

Fourth shall be Chemistry Day.

First week in February shall be Science Day.

Second week in February shall be Invention Day.

Third week in February shall be Justice Day.

Fourth week in February shall be Architecture Day.

First week in March shall be Music Day.

Second week in March shall be Art Day.

Third week in March shall be the Day of Writers.

Fourth week in March shall be the Day of Poets.

First week in April shall be the Day of Mathematics.

Second week in April shall be Astronomy Day.

Third week in April shall be Religion Day.

Fourth week in April shall be Conduct Day.

First week in May shall be Praise Day.

Second week in May shall be Endeavour Day.

Third week in May shall be Honour Day.

Fourth week in May shall be Moses Day.

First week in June shall be Plant Day.

Second week in June shall be Day of Progress.

Third week in June shall be Government Day.

Fourth week in June shall be Social Science Day.

First week in July shall be Hygiene Day.

Second week in July shall be Day of Painters.

Third week in July shall be Day of Sculptors.

Fourth week in July shall be Prophets' Day.

First week in August shall be Day of the Sages.

Second week in August shall be Day of Benefactors.

The festival of the

Third week in August shall be Metal Day.
 Fourth week in August shall be Animal Day.
 First week in September shall be Soul Day.
 Second week in September shall be Liberty Day.
 Third week in September shall be Wood Day.
 Fourth week in September shall be Day of Paul.
 First week in October shall be Day of Isaiah.
 Second week in October shall be Emancipation Day.
 Third week in October shall be Day of Patience.
 Fourth week in October shall be Day of Memorial.
 First week in November shall be Day of Confucius.
 Second week in November shall be Day of Thanksgiving.
 Third week in November shall be Day of Fishes.
 Fourth week in November shall be Day of Insects.
 First week in December shall be Day of Mercy.
 Second week in December shall be Bible Day.
 Third week in December shall be Day of Jesus.
 Fourth week in December shall be Labour Day.

On each of the festivals and holy days there shall likewise be appropriate ceremonies and feasts at the houses of the people and at the public resorts, accompanied by prayer and songs of thanksgiving.

The general festivals of May, July, September, and October shall likewise be field days, when portions of the services and exercises shall be out-doors — in the parks, in the fields and in the streets. And each worshipper shall, during the services at church and at home, wear on the head a garland of flowers in spring and summer, and a wreath of leaves during fall and winter.

Service for the home : There shall be a short prayer on retiring, and on arising from sleep, and at meals. Each house shall have an altar, on which shall be a clod of soil, a tube of water, and a plant. On each festival, during the principal meal, the master shall

begin by blessing bread and wine, and by having each of those assembled at table partake of the same.

During the processions of the people on the occasions of field festivals there shall be borne, in front of the procession and at regular intervals, earth, water and a plant ; and as many as desire may carry a small branch of a tree. Each company marching shall bear a standard. On one standard shall be inscribed " The Church Universal " ; on another, " My House shall be a House of Prayer for All Nations " ; on a third, " God Cannot be Unjust " ; on a fourth, " Emancipation " ; on a fifth, " Education " ; on a sixth, " Liberty " ; and on a seventh, " Social Advancement."

All public and private worship shall be joyful and soulful, and full of reverence for God and love for mankind.

I have now finished with the outline.





CHAPTER XXXIV

THE SPIRITUAL DYNAMO

Bradley.—I should be inclined to accept this new Church Universal, provided the physical and scientific features were eliminated.

Fisher.—And I should be inclined to accept it on condition that the god-idea be eliminated.

Moore.—And I reject it altogether and without any reservation.

Fisher.—It seems to me that our worthy president is trying to play the rôle of a second Samson. Of old his people set themselves up as mighty among the nations. But their strength was in their peculiar superstitions and in the stubbornness with which they defended them. The nations, after modifying and amending these superstitions, adopted them; but at the same time relegated this people to a subordinate or captive position, lo, these nineteen hundred years. Thus they became the scorn and the sport of all men. But mark now! Like Samson in prison, this captive descendant of the despised tribes feels keenly his humiliation; and he resolves, as did Samson when his hair had grown, to grasp with right and left hands the great pillars of the predominating temples, and with one mighty effort to hurl them to the ground.

But does not our modern Samson fear the fall of the temples and the destruction of the modern philistines? Will his effort, if successful, not destroy Judaism as well as Christianity? Perhaps he, like Samson of old, has now come to despise his former fear, and resolves by a singular act of vengeance to end it all.

Well, it is the vengeance of a Titan, mighty and worthy to end a career so eventful as that of the Jewish people; but noble it is not. To be noble, it should destroy completely the fateful superstitions one and all. It should destroy, if it can, not the superstitions of Christianity alone, but those of Judaism likewise. Is this what our revived Samson proposes? Oh, no; the cardinal evil remains embodied in the new phoenix which he proposes shall arise out of the ashes of the destroyed creeds, and I fear this new phoenix more than I fear the creeds we now have.

Noah and his ark, Moses and the retreating sea, Joshua and the sun, Jonah and the whale, Jesus with the loaves and fishes, the rambling nonsense of the Talmud, the exorcisms by the apostles, and the hundreds of thousands of miracles of the Christian churches, — all these are here; they cannot away. Here is the all-sufficient trap for superstition, from which there is no escape but in a gradual and certain death, quiet, unobserved and sure.

And now comes our revived Samson to destroy of a sudden. But is that all? Oh, no. He would put in place what? What but a superstition more to be dreaded than any that has ever yet been permitted to establish itself on earth!

He would remove Jonah and the whale and give us God manifest in plants. He would eliminate Joshua and the sun and give us God manifest in science.

O cunning plan, O crafty device, O scheme of devil incarnate ;—was any such ever more freighted with ingenious potencies for evil than is this seemingly humane idea !

Let but the proposal of this revived Samson take root and grow, and it will bind the human race in a slavery from which there is no escape.

O descendants of the fateful tribes, policemen of the gods, have not your days on earth been sufficient ? Have they not been full of evil and sorrow ? When Isis and Osiris died, should you not also have died ? But, lingering on, when Ormuzd and Ahriman died, should you not then have died ? Zeus, and the hosts of Olympus, and the gods of Rome,—know you not that they are among the dead, lo, these many years ? Then why wander you around wrapped in shrouds, among the living, when your graves gape open these many centuries to receive you ? Are you so attached to misfortune that you love it more than the peace of oblivion ? And now in dying, in stretching out your palsied hands toward the graves that have waited for you so long, shall your last act on earth be one that will forever enslave the living ? Nature forbid !

The gods shall indeed perish, all of them, but not at the hand of a mummy shall they receive their death blow. Science, young, strong, powerful and wise—Science shall destroy them and shall rule in their stead, prince, arbiter, dictator, and sole sovereign forever.

Moore.—We seem in this debate to be impelled on the lines of tangents and acute angles. We started to show the non-utility of science in religion, and the last speaker now asserts the non-utility of God.

What has this boasted, vaunted science done, that it deserves the high rank which the last speaker would

give it? Shall we bow down to wash-blue, to stove polish, to the type-setting machine, to boilers and engines and mowers, and pray to them? Yet these are the products, the manifestations, of what we call science. Will the contemplation of these incline the human heart to acts of benevolence, to charity? Preposterous even to think of it!

Does science to-day indicate the beautiful? On the contrary, it teaches that what we call harmony is but conventional assent. It sees no more intrinsic beauty in the music of Beethoven, Mendelssohn or Wagner than in the discordant noises of Digger Indians.

It tells us that there is no abstract æsthetics, that there is no more real beauty in the classic outlines of a Juno than in the form of a savage of East Africa. Beauty of outline, harmony of sound, the exalted theme of rhetoric, the fragrance of sweet odours, the rich blending of colours and the graceful veering of a curved line—all these it denominates conventional, beautiful or ugly, according as the majority may decide.

If science has so little respect for intrinsic physical beauty, it has even less respect for soul beauty.

If it condescends to postulate justice, that justice is of the cold cause-and-effect order like the law of equilibrium. Mercy and charity it knows nothing of. Sympathy and love are not in its catechism, and self-sacrifice is overlooked by it in silent disdain.

Ye washerwomen, ye hod-carriers, field hands, factory operatives, sailors, come; come, all ye toiling masses, and stretch forth your hands and pour out your hearts to this new genius. Fall down before this new god, this sole sovereign, Science! Throw away your belief in the loving Heavenly Father, and bow in

the dust before the men who invent bicycles and typewriters and automobiles. Embrace the knees of the Spencers, the Huxleys, the Darwins, the Tyndalls, the Haeckels and the Büchners. But, strange to say, not one among the worshippers of science will deign to bend the knee or bow the head — no, not even he whose grandiloquent praise of science but a few moments ago resounded in our ears.

Man must ever pray, must ever ask for strength to do the right, for strength to avoid the evil. Man will ever pray for those he loves, and the blessed Redeemer even enjoins us to pray for those that hate us. And do we not always need mercy and forgiveness? Who shall show mercy, who shall forgive? Shall it be the makers of trolley cars and phonographs? No, none of these, so long as man's normal and proper condition is sanity.

God has ever been, God is and God shall always be; and mankind — even some of the scientists — worship Him. Why should they not? And as for Jews, our last speaker bids them to die; but I am afraid he will be disappointed, as those were disappointed who prayed and worked so zealously for this people's death. We all see now that they are not to die. They are to come to Christ in the fulness of time. Then shall Israel indeed rule on, in Christ and through Christ and forever. Do we not see evidences of this in the new awakening among the Jews? Do not the Reform Jews now speak in high reverence of Jesus from pulpits in which, but a few years ago, they did not even dare mention His name? Did you not notice with what deep reverence our worthy president spoke of Him? Did he not even place Him in the highest rank in his proposed new church, on a par with the most exalted and revered? Is not this a good omen?

And now, as to this new church, this new union of secular science with sacred religion, is it not absurd? Is there not an entire absence of congruity? As well try to add a gallon of opportunity to a gallon of water and call it two gallons. There can be no union of science and religion, nor need there be. There is room for both.

Bradley.—I am opposed to this scheme. I can see no reason or sense in this proposed mingling of the physical and the spiritual. Spirit bears no relation to matter, and has no connection with it. Spirit is immaterial and matter is material; to unite them in religion would lower Christianity to the level of fetichism. And would this remove the cause of evil? Certainly not.

Our evils to-day come because we believe that God has attributes that He has not. The Roman Catholic, for instance, asserts that God is just; but in the same moment he will not hesitate to assert that Presbyterians and Baptists and Jews and Unitarians are doomed to eternal damnation because they are not Roman Catholics. Now Presbyterians assert the very same thing concerning all who are not Presbyterians. And all the other sects and religious systems are likewise unjust and uncharitable.

Clearly, if all these assertions were true, the world would be consigned to an eternity of superhuman terror. These assumptions are so palpably unjust and barbarous as to destroy the idea of justice by distorting it. What wonder, then, that, as a result of this distortion of truth, we have scepticism, atheism and pessimism? What wonder that we have injustice, cruelty, barbarism, selfishness and hypocrisy?

To broaden the vision, to deepen the course of knowledge, is therefore highly desirable, for so doing

would rapidly tend to the elimination of this, which we may properly call the major evil. But to employ the highly complex and elaborate symbolism proposed in the plan of our president, would, I fear, but intensify the evil.

To assume for the things of the earth, the waters, the air or the heavens, the highly symbolic connection or relation that may exist between them and God, and to worship such an assumption, would surely tend to open many thousand new avenues of dishonest gain for the great army of the rapacious and the cunning. Mind readers, necromancers and science healers would again flourish in vast multitudes, as in the palmy days of paganism. Long-haired and short-brained feebleness would again come to the front and pass current as wisdom, until in the end each house would be divided against itself, and chaos and confusion would reign. Would it not be wiser for us to obey the injunction and rather "bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of"?

Therefore I say that while I am inclined to favour the spread of scientific knowledge in every direction, I am emphatically opposed to the adoption of a system which would mix the spiritual and the material into a conglomerate mass. In my opinion, such a mixing would lead to anarchy, in belief and in act.

Quail.—It seems to me that we have veered considerably from the original intention of this meeting. As I understand it, Mr. Moore, differing radically from the president's views, challenged him to debate. But up to now there has scarcely been any debate at all. I therefore suggest that we permit Mr. Moore and the president to continue on the lines of our original intention.

Moore.—I think the suggestion a proper one, and I will, if there is no objection, continue to the end. And if the president does not object, I will proceed by a series of questions and answers.

Ezra.—I do not object.

Moore.—Do you affirm or do you deny the conclusions of Mr. Bradley?

Ezra.—I neither affirm nor deny.

Moore.—Please explain.

Ezra.—The distortion of the proposition by the selfish or the weak is a probability, but that such would occur to the extent he predicts may be safely denied.

Moore.—You have answered the question only partially. Please continue, and briefly answer the whole.

Ezra.—This I cannot do so briefly as I should like.

Moore.—You may take whatever time you require.

Ezra.—Thank you. As a rule, we believe we know more of matter than of mind; but, in reality, we know nothing of matter but what the mind tells us. It is the mind that tells us that we are cold, or hot, or hungry, or that fine scenery is before us, or that good music is being played. Without mind we should have no conception of matter whatever. Our real self, the ego, then, seems to be the mind.

Connected with this mind, this ego, is a vast network of what we may term tellers, or notifiers, which we call nerves. These put us in communication with ourselves and with the outer world.

A person, then, seems to be a dynamo surrounded by a network of connecting wires, which act and react on one another from within to without and from without to within.

Through the medium of this network of notifiers or

tellers, we are enabled to inform the mind of what is going on within us and outside of us. Whenever these notifiers or tellers are but feebly developed they impart imperfect information, deceiving and misleading the mind. The higher the development of the notifiers or tellers the more correct information will they impart to the mind. By gradual development, the tellers or notifiers impart so high a quality of information as to place the mind in harmony with another and infinitely greater Dynamo ; and this greater Dynamo is God.

The notifiers or tellers of the mind pursue their functions in much the same way as bees fly from flower to flower, gather material, transform it, through chemical changes within themselves, into honey, and finally deposit it in the hive. And as an imperfect bee must deposit imperfect honey, so must undeveloped tellers or notifiers impart imperfect information. Imperfect information must produce an imperfect mind, and an imperfect mind can have no right conception of the Universal Dynamo ; therefore must have an incorrect conception of universal harmony, or God. Such a mind, having an incorrect conception, must necessarily be of a low order, therefore cruel, inhuman, and anti-social. Such a mind, in worship, must necessarily be idolatrous, and its belief must be one of idolatry. It therefore follows that it is our primary duty to develop to the highest degree the tellers and notifiers ; otherwise there can be no correct conception of God. With the end in view of arriving at a correct conception of God, I have offered this plan for your consideration.

To continue : If God is the great Spiritual Dynamo, the laws of God serve to connect us with Him just as the network of tellers or notifiers within us connect us with the mind. Therefore, beginning with God, and

descending, we have God, His laws, the nervous system of man, and, lastly, man's mind.

Beginning with man, and ascending, we have, first, the mind of man, then the nervous system, then the laws of God, and finally God.

Accepting what has here been said, what must we further accept as a logical conclusion? This : that we can no more have a conception of God, without having a conception of His laws, than we can have a conception of our mind without the aid of our nervous system.

If this conclusion be accepted, what must follow? Must we not admit that the study of the laws of God will bring us nearer to God? And if we are to accept the laws as God's laws, does it not become our duty and our pleasure to study them? And if we are to study them, should we not do so in all seriousness, and with due spiritual elevation of mind? In what better place and at what better time can this be done than at and during divine service and as a part of it?





CHAPTER XXXV

SACRED AND SECULAR

Moore.— Do you believe in the Bible ?

Ezra.— In some portions of it, yes ; in others, no.

Moore.— I mean, of course, so far as you are concerned, the Old Testament.

Ezra.— There are some things in the Old, and some things in the New Testament in which I believe, and some in which I do not believe.

Moore.— But if you were a strict, believing Jew ?

Ezra.— Jews were never commanded to believe in the Bible ; they were only commanded to believe in God.

Moore.— Were not commands given that demand belief ?

Ezra.— Yes, and they are almost altogether confined to rules of conduct, to rules for right doing or righteousness. These rules are almost axiomatic and self-evident, appealing to our reason and understanding.

Moore.— Do you not place the Bible above the Koran, the Vedas, or Shakespeare ?

Ezra.— Yes, but only those portions of the Bible which are grander or nobler than those of the other books you name.

Moore.— Who does the discriminating for you ?

Ezra.—Every Jew who cares to do so may study and decide for himself. Orthodox Jews usually attend the "Beth Hamedrash," the House of Learning, and there freely enter into discussion and receive or give opinions on the Scriptures or commentaries.

Moore.—Can you show me any authority in the Bible under which Jews or Christians are permitted to adopt the new plan of worship you propose?

Ezra.—Yes. On a close examination of the most inspired portions of the Old and New Testaments, it will be clearly seen that the prophets could not have said what they did—could not, in fact, have become inspired—without this very study.

Moore.—Is not the Bible sufficient for right living here and for eternal salvation hereafter?

Ezra.—By no means; for, as we have seen from what has been said in previous portions of the debate and at the last meeting on this subject, limitations that confine belief and line of conduct to the Bible alone must lead to idolatry or to atheism. And now, with your permission, I should like to ask you some questions.

Moore.—You may ask.

Ezra.—Does not the Bible say that God created the heavens and the earth?

Moore.—Yes.

Ezra.—Does not the Bible also say that after each act of creation "God saw that it was good"?

Moore.—Yes.

Ezra.—What does that mean?

Moore.—It means what it says, that the works of God were good and not bad.

Ezra.—But may we not assume here that the goodness in creation was a manifestation of the wisdom of God?

Moore.—The words of Scripture are plain enough as we find them, and I see no necessity for admitting some metaphysical or hidden meaning where none is intended.

Ezra.—There is no intention on my part to cause you to admit anything contrary to Scripture. I therefore again ask, what does the statement after the acts of creation mean : “ And God saw that it was good ” ?

Moore.— I prefer that you answer that question.

Ezra.— Very well, then, I will do so. The words, “ And God saw that it was good,” mean that the works of God corresponded with His design ; do they not ?

Moore.— Well, yes, it would seem so.

Ezra.— Furthermore, we read in Jeremiah x., 12, “ He hath established the world by his wisdom,” and in Proverbs iii., 19, we read, “ The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth ; by understanding hath he established the heavens,” and in Psalms civ., 24, we read, “ O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all.” May we not, therefore, infer from all this, that the words “ good ” and “ wisdom ” have, in the sense in which they are used, the same meaning ?

Moore.— Yes, I think they are so used, and may be so understood.

Ezra.— We may then assert that Scripture teaches that God’s works are a manifestation of God’s wisdom, may we not ?

Moore.— Yes.

Ezra.— May we not likewise assert that by the diligent study of God’s works we should obtain a clearer idea of God’s wisdom than by neglect of this study ?

Moore.— I think that also may be admitted.

Ezra.— That we have Scripture warrant for such an

admission is evident from the following : Proverbs iv., 7, says, " Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom " ; and Proverbs iii., 13, says, " Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." Now is not all this the wisdom spoken of, the wisdom which is to be gained through study of God's laws, through study of God's works ?

Moore.— It would seem so.

Ezra.— And if this wisdom is to be obtained, should the opportunity of obtaining it be limited to the few, or should the opportunity be widened so as to embrace the largest possible number ?

Moore.— The largest possible number.

Ezra.— And now, in view of all these admissions, I ask Mr. Moore to tell me whether he is still opposed to the proposed change in belief and mode of worship ?

Moore.— I am.

Ezra.— Will you please give your reasons ?

Moore.— I have already given them ; but in order not to avoid the issue, I will again do so in words which may be different, but which will embody the same idea.

Briefly, then, I recognise the utility of science, and I would have it maintain its place as a factor in progress. I would, however, as soon introduce a carpenter shop or a cigar factory into a church, and make the explanation of them a part of divine service, as introduce earth, rock, water, plants, acids, and scientific instruments, and make them a part of divine service.

Besides, as the president has himself told us in a former meeting, the evolutionary stages in religion are from the more involved symbolic form to the less involved. And is it not evident that our present mode of service is less involved than is the one proposed ? Should we not, therefore, in adopting it, go downward

from the higher to the lower form? Is this in accord with the genius and spirit of the American people? Is it not just the opposite?

Ezra.—I think it can be shown that there is nothing in this proposed plan that is contrary to the genius and spirit of the American people. On the contrary, it will, I think, be clearly shown that the plan is in entire harmony with this people's grand past, and with its still grander future.

First of all, I deny that the proposed form is more symbolic and more involved than that now in vogue. It seems to be, but it will be clearly shown not to be.

At the present time, those eager questioners, the young, come to us asking; and when we are unable to answer, we are forced to say, "That is a mystery." Is not this symbolism? It certainly is, and of a most unsatisfactory kind. As well feed a work horse on bran as an intelligent child with the constant "That is a mystery." No wonder that in time, as the child grows older, it begins to suspect that "mystery" means "ignorance" or "deception" or "error."

Now, under the proposed change, let this same child ask questions; let it ask, "What is God?" Then let the minister, parent or teacher show the child a plant, and say, "God is made manifest to us through His works. Study this plant, ask it questions, and in time you will find the answer."

Moore.—With a desire to show perfect consideration, and in a spirit of kindness, I am constrained to say to our worthy president that in my opinion he is labouring under an hallucination. He seems to think that by the abolition of the church, and by the substitution of a sort of dime museum show, he will change human nature.

By this wonderful change he proposes to tell a child

what God is. By it he proposes to change the flint-hearted employer into a philanthropist. Through this new dime museum church he proposes to elevate the world, to abolish poverty, and to supply an ever-flowing fountain of happiness for one and all. O tried and trusted common sense, guide and director, where art thou?

Ezra.—Of the sense that is common there is a plenty; much more than we should have and would have, were the avenues of the understanding opened out. The sense that is common is dark indeed. It toils on stupidly, stolidly bearing grievances, humiliations and burdens like the ox and the ass, with no power to escape the curse of its animal nature, which binds it to the earth, a thing, a tool, a helot and a sudra. Is this result brought about through man's obedience to God's law, or through his disregard of God's law? How can it be through obedience, when we see clearly that it is the effect of ignorance? And again, whenever opportunity for education is offered and made use of, is there not a change? Does not the former rustic, the former boor, through education, learn to think, learn to generalise, learn to become a free man?

Moore.—Does not our public school system permit all this?

Ezra.—No, it does not. An elementary education does not put the mass on a par in development with the few whose privilege it has been to attend college and university.

Moore.—But would you have hod-carriers, chamber-maids, and dish-washers attend college and the university?

Ezra.—And why not? Are they not God's children, as are the few favoured ones?

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Moore.—Are you speaking of socialism, or of some new Utopia?

Ezra.—No, I am speaking of conditions as they are. I realise as clearly as you do that those persons you mention cannot afford to go to college, but that fact need not prevent them from learning what they should. There would be ample opportunity to obtain this education under the proposed change in the church.

Moore.—But of what practical utility would all this be?

Ezra.—Of the highest possible practical utility, for it would in time transform the masses from animals into intelligent men and women.

Moore.—Having been thus transformed, would they still be content to be menials and servants?

Ezra.—No, they would climb higher.

Moore.—Who would take their places?

Ezra.—The lower.

Moore.—And if they also climbed higher?

Ezra.—Then in the end this labour would be better done, better compensated, and would take on a much less degraded form.

So as not to be misunderstood, I desire, with your permission, to draw your attention to my opening remarks in the review of the last meeting. I refer to the remarks on intuition and inspiration.

It was then stated that what we call intuition or inspiration is the result of generalisation on many single points of experience.

This inspiration, this intuition, it is, which has developed and civilised, which has made us heirs to many ten thousand blessings. And yet all these blessings came about through the inspiration of the few, mainly the privileged few. Now is it not reasonable to suppose that these blessings will multiply greatly as we

make it possible for the many, for the masses, for the millions, to enter this heretofore narrow, limited and privileged field ?

Moore.— Yes, that conclusion seems plausible ; but the education you propose need not necessarily be given in church. It can be acquired in secular night schools, or through museums and libraries. These are secular institutions ; a church is sacred.

Ezra.— Please give me definitions of “ secular ” and “ sacred.”

Moore.— “ Secular ” means every-day, earthly work ; “ sacred ” means holy themes related to God and to Heaven.

Ezra.— And this earth, was it made by God ?

Moore.— It was.

Ezra.— Did not God pronounce this earth good ?

Moore.— He did.

Ezra.— Does not that make this earth sacred ?

Moore.— It would seem so.

Ezra.— Is it not in reality a heavenly body, as much so as the moon, Saturn, Mercury, the sun or other suns ?

Moore.— It so appears to me.

Ezra.— If the earth is sacred, where, then, is the secular ?

Moore.— Shovelling dirt, paying a check, or taking care of a baby is secular work ; but church or divine service is sacred. Is it not so ?

Ezra.— No, for shovelling dirt is a duty,— a duty to ourselves, or a duty in return for compensation from others. This task, when conscientiously performed, becomes sacred, a sacred duty. All other work whatsoever of a like nature is equally sacred. The only secular work, therefore, is performed when we break God’s law, when we sin.

Moore.—Would you then also call the kindergarten, the public school and the university sacred?

Ezra.—Most decidedly, yes; and when once the evils of dogmatic theology are abolished it will then be proper to teach God's laws in every educational institution in the land and in the world.

Moore.—Do you class spelling, reading, arithmetic, writing and grammar as sacred studies?

Ezra.—I do; for, as I said before, the only secular work is sin.

Moore.—What about objects? Are all objects, in your opinion, sacred?

Ezra.—Yes, all objects excepting those that cause us to break God's law.

Moore.—Is earth, then, sacred?

Ezra.—Why is it not? Do not the particles which compose it perform God's law?

Moore.—Is God sacred?

Ezra.—Yes.

Moore.—Then see to what a base conclusion this brings us. Is not this sacrilege?

Ezra.—No, it is not sacrilege, though it seems such. God is sacred in the highest. His manifestations, His work, His laws, are infinitely inferior in degree of sacredness, and thus, while they do not demand our prayers, they demand our reverent contemplation.

Moore.—But is not this nature worship, idolatry?

Ezra.—No, not so long as we address all our prayers to God alone, and contemplate His work, His laws, as a means of bringing us nearer to Him.

Bradley.—As the time for adjournment is near at hand, I move that the debate close for to-day, and that it be continued to-morrow.

The motion prevailed, and the meeting adjourned.



CHAPTER XXXVI

THE PROOF OF GOD

REPORT of an adjourned meeting of the Twentieth Century Club, New York, May 21, 1899, 1 P.M.

Ezra arose and said : " The adjourned meeting will now come to order."

Quail.—I move that, for the time being, all members be permitted to engage in the debate.

Bradley.—I second the motion.

The motion was carried.

Fisher.—While I am heartily in favour of the proposed change in the education for the masses, and of the abolition of the churches, I am opposed to this dragging in, by head and heels, of the now exploded god-idea.

Will this proposed change of the god-idea in education change the natures of the millionaire employers? Will it cause the great monopolists to divide their fat dividends with their toilers?

Will it cause the dealers in stocks to give the masses inside pointers just for philanthropy's sake? Will it cause the land-owners to reduce voluntarily the rent of the tenement-house dwellers? Yes, when the Czar joins the anarchists; when capitalists become socialists;

when the leopard changes his spots, and when the gorilla teaches astronomy. The sooner the masses learn to understand the value of force in organisation, and the sooner they know how to wield this force in its most effective way, the sooner will they receive what they are entitled to. Education in itself is not sufficient, for there are many university graduates in subordinate and menial positions. Is not this true?

Ezra.—It is true, but that does not prove your assertions to be founded on facts.

Fisher.—Why not, pray?

Ezra.—The university graduates that hold subordinate or menial positions hold those positions because they do not know how to utilise their education. They neglect to generalise; or, if they generalise, they do so incorrectly.

If they have been taught economics, for instance, and are familiar with the laws governing international production and its effects on demand and on price-fluctuation, they may soon become valuable product factors or stock brokers. If they have been taught chemistry properly, and have generalised correctly on their knowledge, their services will soon be of high value to the manufacturer or the publisher; and so throughout the whole list of studies.

Heterogeneous items of knowledge stored in the mind without generalisation are like a mass of accumulated money buried in an inaccessible place, of which the owner is prevented from using the interest or principal.

And as to your statement that the proposed change in belief would have no effect on the millionaires, this, too, can be called into question.

Millionaires, like other factors in the world, are

subject to the laws of condition and of environment. If these millionaires employ an unthinking mass of men and women, they will so ply them as to squeeze out the utmost advantage to themselves, regardless of any disadvantage that may be to the workers. Nor will the fear of insubordination, coercion or rebellious force on the part of ignorant workers deter the millionaire from following out the course of advantage open to him.

As soon, however, as the workers shall have ascended in the scale of intelligence, there will necessarily follow a change in the environment. This change will materially affect the conditions, will raise the status of the workers, and will ultimately benefit all.

That this proposition is true may be clearly seen in the world's wage rate. It is highest in the United States, descending in about these several stages : England, Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Spain, Russia, Turkey, India, China, the peons of South America, and the negroes of East Africa.

If the intelligence of the peoples named should be reversed, the wage rate would change correspondingly. This law it is, then, which represents the real sovereignty, the real majesty, of a people, and which clearly proves that God blesses most that people highest in the scale of intelligence.

Fisher.— Suppose, for instance, that what you say is true, and suppose, further, that this higher intelligence is attained, will not such increased measure of prosperity so crowd the earth with increased population as again to force the masses into slavery ?

Ezra.— I do not think so, for it seems to be the law that the ratio of increase in population declines perceptibly as general intelligence advances.

Fisher.—But of what use would this increased intelligence be in a world where the avenues and opportunities are so entirely monopolised as now?

Ezra.—With the advance of general intelligence, modifications will follow which will materially change the factors of opportunity and monopoly.

Fisher.—Through socialism?

Ezra.—Perhaps through that partly, and partly through competition.

Fisher.—How through competition?

Ezra.—Increased intelligence, spurred on by competition, will in the end so bring to light the now hidden laws as to give the world one of its chief and ultimate blessings. This blessing will be free motive power. Whether this will be in the form of compressed or expanded air, in the expansion of water, in the utilisation of tides, in the storage of the power in the trade winds, in the utilisation of the electrical forces, or in all these combined, or in some new force not yet discovered, cannot at this time be discerned with certainty. Judging by the discoveries of the nineteenth century, there is sufficient indication that it will all end in the free production and free distribution of motive power.

And when this result shall have been brought about, it will produce the most wonderful and potent changes the world has ever witnessed. It will permit the systematic removal from off the whole face of the habitable world, of rock, boulder, sand and unfruitful soil, which, pulverised and blended, can be deposited again in deep layers, so that fruitful soil will be everywhere. It will utilise the billions of tons of food-producing manures by placing them on the fields of the world, instead of permitting them, as at present, to pollute and poison the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Free power will level the mountains, raise the depressions, span the chasms, drain the swamps, supply moisture to the thirsty earth, and make level the pathway in every direction.

Fisher.—So far as the proposed religious reform is concerned, does it not rest on the fundamental doctrine of monotheism ?

Ezra.—It does.

Fisher.—But if monotheism can be proven untenable, if it can be proven of no value in fact, would not that proof destroy your conclusion ?

Ezra.—It would.

Fisher.—I now challenge your proof, and ask that you present it.

Ezra.—My proof of God is in the laws of God, made manifest in all creation.

Fisher.—What if I deny creation ?

Ezra.—Do you deny that your hand now rests on a table ?

Fisher.—No.

Ezra.—Is not the table wood ?

Fisher.—Yes.

Ezra.—Did not the wood grow ? Was it not contained in a growing tree ?

Fisher.—Yes.

Ezra.—Then when it grew it obeyed the law of God in growing, as this table now obeys God's law of gravitation.

Fisher.—Do you believe there is a table ?

Ezra.—Yes.

Fisher.—Do you believe there is a God ?

Ezra.—Yes.

Fisher.—There are two things, then, in the universe, — God and the table. How, then, can God be one ?

Let There Be Light

Ezra.—There was a time when the table was not here, and when the tree was not here, yet God was here.

Fisher.—But were not that table, and the tree from which it came, potentially present in the world before the plant took form and grew?

Ezra.—If they were potentially present in the world, and if the world possessed wisdom, idea and will, and if the world, combining these, brought forth the tree, then was it a god.

Fisher.—Why, then, is not the earth God?

Ezra.—Because there are more earths, larger than this.

Fisher.—Why are not these larger earths gods?

Ezra.—Because the suns are still larger.

Fisher.—Why are the suns not gods?

Ezra.—Because the laws which control and govern them are greater than they.

Fisher.—Why are these laws, then, not God?

Ezra.—Because laws are means and agencies, and not a person.

Fisher.—Describe to me the personality of God. Does He sit? Does He stand? Does He walk? Does He fly?

Ezra.—No finite being can describe the infinite God; but this much we may know for a certainty, that the infinite God has no necessity of doing the things you mention.

Fisher.—Where does He live?

Ezra.—In the Universe.

Fisher.—Is He the Universe?

Ezra.—He is the only entity in the Universe.

Fisher.—Are not you, I, this table, entities?

Ezra.—No.

Fisher.—What, then ?

Ezra.—Non-entities, manifestations, phenomena.

Fisher.—Then God alone exists ; but how comes it that you and I are here, that this table is here, and that the earth is here ?

Ezra.—These things are here so long as God permits it. Were He to remove His agents, the laws, these objects would no longer exist.

Fisher.—No, not in this form, but perhaps in some other.

Ezra.—No, not in any form ; for to admit that matter is eternal is to admit that matter is a condition of God, or a co-partner in Being. There would then be two entities, God and matter, and God then would no longer be one.

Fisher.—But what harm if there were two, three, a dozen, or a thousand gods ?

Ezra.—More than one God would limit all the gods by conditions, and thus render them finite ; and conditioned, finite gods cannot control or govern an infinite universe. Therefore, there can be only one God.

Fisher.—Do you believe in the immortality of the soul ?

Ezra.—Yes.

Fisher.—Why do you believe in it ?

Ezra.—Because spiritual life is entity, and entity is immortality. The existence of phenomena in terms of absolute existence is absolute non-existence.

Fisher.—This table, not being absolute non-existence, has, therefore, an immortal soul ?

Ezra. No, the table has no soul at all ; it is simply a manifestation of law, a phenomenon.

Fisher.—And these immortal souls,—tell us something about them. Do they preserve their identity, or do they all enter God as drops of water enter the ocean ?

Ezra.—I am unable to tell you this.

Moore.—Would not the abolition of the Church as it is, and the substitution of the plan set forth, lower religion to the level of science?

Ezra.—No, it would not lower, it would elevate. It would not only elevate science to the level of religion, but it would elevate religion to a much higher level than it has now reached.

Moore.—Of what value is science in teaching such doctrines as punishment for sin, forgiveness and justification through faith?

Ezra.—I will try to answer you presently, but at this time I should be glad to have you tell me what you believe science to be?

Moore.—I think that science is the final result of experiment, experience, comparison and generalisation.

Ezra.—You have answered concisely, and, I think, correctly. And now please tell me whether you can point out a better way of arriving at the truth than by this process.

Moore.—Yes, in matters of religion inspiration is far better and surer.

Ezra.—Why?

Moore.—Because the senses of man are feeble and untrustworthy. The most gifted and best-trained often err; much more may this be said of those not gifted or not specially trained.

Ezra.—What do you believe inspiration to be?

Moore.—Spiritual truths which God imparted to certain men.

Ezra.—How were these truths imparted?

Moore.—Does not the Bible tell us? Does it not state that God spoke to the inspired men in dreams, through messengers or by voice.

Fisher.—If anyone had represented himself to be inspired, would his representation have been sufficient?

Moore.—That would have depended on his proof.

Fisher.—If the proof had been acceptable?

Moore.—It would then have been received as sufficient.

Fisher.—Supposing that after having given proof some one had announced that he had been directed to order all men to dress in an embroidered petticoat, and all women to wear a red soldier-cap, and all people to dance a polka morning and evening, and to eat garlic three times a day.

Moore.—That would have been considered nonsense.

Fisher.—Why?

Moore.—Because it does not follow the ethical, moral or æsthetic trend of inspiration, nor would it meet the needs of the people.

Ezra.—In deciding what was inspiration, did not the people compare their experiences with what was represented to them as inspiration? Did they not, through generalisation, intuitively conclude to accept some things and to reject others?

Moore.—So it would seem.

Ezra.—It would also seem, then, that the mode of acceptance of Scripture inspiration in no wise differed from the mode of acceptance of facts established through scientific research.

Moore.—Such seems to be the case.

Ezra.—Science and inspiration are, therefore, of equal authority in questions of punishment for sin, forgiveness and justification through faith, are they not?

Moore.—By no means.

Ezra.—Why not?

Moore.—Because inspiration never errs, and the

conclusions of science have undergone many and radical changes.

Ezra.—Is the entire Bible inspired, or are only parts of it inspired?

Moore.—We are taught that the entire Bible is inspired.

Ezra.—Do you believe the Prodigal Son was a real person?

Moore.—No, I believe that the story of the Prodigal Son was told as a parable, to set forth a truth.

Ezra.—Do you believe that Jonah lived in a fish for three days?

Moore.—Do not the orthodox Jews believe that?

Ezra.—Very few, and those among the most ignorant. At all events, there is no commandment in the Bible that demands belief in this story as a literal fact.

Moore.—What, then, was the purpose of having it in the Bible?

Ezra.—The purpose was precisely the same as in the case of the story of the Prodigal Son. It is a parable.

Moore.—A parable? Wherein is its application?

Ezra.—Here: Jonah, the Prophet, is Israel, whom God chose as a missionary among the nations. Israel tried hard to run away from his mission, and, as a punishment, was cast into the depths of misery. The captive, spewed out among the heathen, at last fulfilled his task by delivering his message.

Moore.—Are all other portions of the Bible parables?

Ezra.—Almost all those portions that contain supernatural elements. In fact, the Bible may be divided into four divisions: First, self-evident inspired truths; second, history; third, traditions; fourth, parables.

Moore.—How are we then to distinguish the various divisions in order to avoid confusion?

Ezra.—Fortunately, the principal and highest ideas are self-evident, and sufficient in themselves without any need of illustration by historical facts, by tradition, or by parable. Among these are the following: "Love thy neighbour as thyself," "Forgive, if you would be forgiven," "Righteousness exalteth a nation," "Ye shall have the same law for the native and for the stranger," etc. But many truths are obscured, and cannot be discerned with certainty.

Moore.—Why should that be ?

Ezra.—Because, first, the Hebrew alphabet, until within recent times, had no letters or signs to designate vowels ; second, because in ancient times certain words in the Hebrew language had meanings that have not been transmitted to us ; third, because there exist no grammar and dictionary of the ancient Hebrew language.

Moore.—How may we know what portion of the Bible should be accepted as positive fact and doctrine, and what portion is parable ?

Ezra.—It is safe to accept only that portion which treats of ideas known to be in harmony with universal law,—that which is represented in a form so convincing to our understanding that it is impossible for us to deny it. To believe less is to be an infidel to truth ; to believe more is idolatry.

Moore.—This would undermine all belief in the Bible.

Ezra.—By no means ; on the contrary, it establishes belief in the inspiration of the Bible on a firmer basis than ever.

Moore.—You seem to be juggling with words.

Ezra. A little patience, and you will clearly see that I am not. The historical and traditional portions are inserted in the Bible as a means for an end ; so are the

parable portions. What is that end? If we consider the Bible from the beginning to the end, the Old Testament and the New, we find that it inculcates right doing, or righteousness toward our fellow-man. It also clearly teaches that God is our Father, and that we should love Him with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our might. This is commanded; but no command is given to believe in a parable or in a supernatural story.

Fisher.—What about Noah and his ark, the crossing of the Red Sea dry-shod, etc.?

Ezra.—These are traditions, and are of the same order as the traditions of all other primitive peoples.

Moore.—Should they be rejected?

Ezra.—They need not be rejected, nor need they be accepted.

They should be looked upon simply as objects of study in archæology. A young child may present a graceful appearance in short clothes and curls; an adult would be deemed insane who should walk the streets so dressed. But an adult must nevertheless wear garments, and those most suitable are the kind in vogue. So we in our day should appear ridiculous if we clothed our minds with primitive traditions. Our intellectual garments should be the knowledge current to-day, useful and desirable for us.





CHAPTER XXXVII

WHAT GOD IS

Fisher.—Tell me, is not God supernatural ?

Moore.—To me He seems so. What is your opinion, Mr. President ?

Ezra.—I am unable to explain what God is. Whatever we know of God we know through God's laws ; and we see that these laws operate in a uniformly constant and consistent manner.

Moore.—But is not God almighty ? Can He not ordain, change, modify and justify ?

Ezra.—As long as we are finite, we can never know what God is.

Fisher.—Then how do you know there is a God ?

Ezra.—Because He is made manifest to us through His works.

Fisher.—Do not these works by their perpetually self-acting operation, the ceaseless ebb and flow of effects of prior causes,—do not all these do away with any necessity for a God ?

Ezra.—On the contrary ; for all things that we call matter or force are but phenomena. They are but manifestations, appearances. Behind and beyond all this is the Noumenon, the Real, the Entity, the "I Am."

Fisher.—Is God, then, the totality of the Universe ?

Ezra.—No mortal can ever know what God is.

Moore.—But does not our immortal soul discern God's will toward us ?

Ezra.—Our souls on earth may only discern God's will toward us after thorough study of God's laws. The greater comprehension we have of Universal Harmony, the clearer will be our understanding of God's intent toward us.

Fisher.—But are not God's laws God ?

Ezra.—No more than a man's eye or his ear is his mind. The eye and the ear are servants of the mind or soul, and, like these, force and matter are but the servants of the Universal Mind, God.

Fisher.—How do you know this ?

Ezra.—If we behold a network of wires electrically charged, do we not infer that the source of the power manifest in the wires is centred in a dynamo ?

Fisher.—It would seem, then, that God and His laws are God, would it not ?

Ezra.—The laws of God are manifestations of God. What God is, I do not know.

Fisher.—How, then, can you assert that God is unconditioned ?

Ezra.—Because I can think of no beginning and no ending of Time and Space. In this Time and in this Space are manifestations of Being. Manifestations of Being could not exist unless there were a Being. If we now postulate a Being, we must in the end conclude that the Being must necessarily be the primary and sole cause of manifestation.

To postulate manifestation without a Power which manifests seems to me an absurdity. To assume this Power, we must necessarily predicate Him to be unconditioned.

Conditions and limitations would necessarily make the conditions and limitations primary causes. There would then be several primary, absolute powers ; and this is an impossibility. For the existence of more than one unconditioned God would make any and all the gods finite ; and a finite god is no god at all ; such a god can have no truer conception of the infinite universe than we can have. Therefore we may be more certain in knowing that there is an unconditioned infinite God than in knowing any other thing whatever.

Moore.—Being unconditioned, cannot God ordain, change, modify and justify ? Can He not set His usual laws aside to serve special occasions ?

Ezra.—What God can do is one thing ; what He does is another. It would lead to error and idolatry were finite minds to postulate what God can do, and, having done so, to build up a plan of conduct or system of belief. Error would then be our guide, and a cruel and barbarous one it would prove to be.

The true guide is here. God makes Himself manifest to us through His work, in the manner in which He would have us understand Him.

Moore.—There is a fatal flaw in this whole line of argument. We may observe that, at all times and everywhere, students of physical law are, as a rule, agnostics and atheists. Now, would not the proposed new church be likely to engender agnosticism and atheism among all the people ?

Ezra.—Not all physicists are what you say they are ; but only a small proportion of them, who, through aggressive propaganda of their opinions, seem greater in number than they really are.

Besides, in the current systems of dogmatic theology

there is much more material for aggressive criticism than there would be in the system proposed.

And as for the mass of the people, religious faith among them may be promoted and maintained only by one of two methods : the inculcation of religious ideas without criticism, or a similar inculcation with criticism.

That system of belief which is commanded to be received without criticism, is so received, and is maintained without dissent,—when? Only when and so long as criticism does not enter into it as a factor. But whenever the intelligence of the people generates a spirit of criticism the people's religious belief must be modified to conform to the conclusion of the criticism, or it will either fade away or turn, first to scepticism, and finally to hypocrisy or atheism.

That such is the fact is evident. Before the general education of the masses, there was almost universal assent to the predominant faiths; but to-day, through the increase of general intelligence, this assent is wanting.

What proportion, for instance, of the eighty millions of people of the United States are regular attendants at church, or have religious worship at home? It is, therefore, evident that this lack of conformity must be due to one of two causes : either the people are becoming irreligious, or they are attaining a higher level of intelligence than their religion is fitted for. In my opinion it is this latter cause which breeds scepticism, hypocrisy, atheism and pessimism. If so, it must necessarily follow that a religious system which permits free criticism along the lines of highest experience and of Universal Law must tend to remove the causes of scepticism, and thus to maintain belief up to the highest possible standard of civilization.

Moore.—You ask what proportion of the eighty

million people of the United States attend church or have religious worship at home? While I must admit that the proportion is very small, smaller than it has ever been in the religious history of the world, yet I would attribute that fact to certain causes which distract the attention of the people and thus weaken their faith. Among these causes are, first, newspaper reading; second, the general attendance at public games and recreations; and third, the theatre and other places of amusement.

Ezra.—And is there any reason why the church service and the religious service at home cannot be made as interesting as the things you have named? Cannot the church service be made as interesting as the theatre? Surely; far more so, and more profitable besides. That religious system which neglects to take into consideration the psychological law that governs mankind must necessarily fall to the rear as a factor, as a teacher. The same is true of all other work that has for its aim the directing, guiding and uplifting of mankind.

Temperance workers, for instance, must find their efforts minimised and neutralised so long as they overlook this obvious law.

The human being has his ideal and æsthetic appetites as well as his craving for physical food.

The poor man may be freely admitted to the library, the museum and the picture gallery, that is true; but these things are void of interest and meaningless, unless the mind be first prepared to appreciate and understand them. This primary work neglected, what result must follow? What but the gin shop? Liquor and tobacco are made to remove, for a period of time, that stolidity of mind which, if continuous, would render life unbearable.

Can there not be a higher, nobler and sufficient substitute to meet this self-same craving of the mind ? Surely.

Fisher.—Does this proposed system suggest prayers to God ?

Ezra.—Yes.

Fisher.—Of what use is prayer by a finite being to an unconditioned, infinite God ? If such a God must answer prayer, he can then no longer be unconditioned ; the finite petitioner who could compel answers would be a primary cause, hence a god. But if the answers are to be fortuitous—sometimes yes, sometimes no—then a favourable response depends as much upon hazard as does the drawing of a prize in a lottery.

Ezra.—Is it not a universal law that the predominating body governs the non-predominating ?

Fisher.—Yes.

Ezra.—Since that is so, we may conclude that prayer by a finite being cannot govern or control the Will of God. God need not come in harmony with the man, but man, by following God's law, can come closer to God.

Fisher.—I do not understand you. How can man come closer to God ?

Ezra.—By studying God's law.

Fisher.—Again I fail to understand how the study of what you call God's laws will bring any man closer to God, or make his prayer more potent than that of the ignorant man.

Ezra.—To enter upon this subject, it would be necessary for me to be permitted sufficient time.

Quail.—I hope the time will be permitted.

Moore.—I will cheerfully permit the president to continue.

Ezra.—Very good. Prayer is of two kinds : one of thanksgiving, and the other for aid. Properly to render thanks or to ask for aid, it is essential that we realise, to some extent, what we are and to whom we address our prayer.

It is essential, first of all, for all of us to realise that we are largely the products of our thoughts and acts. It is essential for us to realise that ennobling themes, ennobling acts, are what we may term the soul-cells that upbuild within us a noble soul. Throughout the whole world has the loving and merciful God implanted in His works certain evidences of His Will ; and if we but properly decipher this Will, we shall clearly discern that it is manifest in a two-fold type ; the first aspect of which is Justice, and the second Beauty. The soul of man, in the image of God, finds its highest earthly joy in Beauty, in Art ; and here man is but walking in God's shadow.

Let anyone contemplate the unattractive straight line ; then, in his mind's eye, let him see this line inclined in various graceful curves. He will be surprised to discover that those curves and lines which are pronounced artistic are in effect rhythmic and harmonious.

Three bold curves to the right must be mated by three bold curves to the left. In other words, not Beauty alone, but also the soul of Equity and Justice is here personified and materialised. This is true in embroidery, it is true in architecture, it is true in geometry, it is true in sculpture.

This principle is equally true in music, in the blending of colours. It is true in poetry and prose. It is true in logic and it is true in philosophy. It is also true in Justice, in Love, in Charity, in Inspiration and in Duty.

Let There Be Light

The type of this beauty has been provided for us by the Father of Justice, by the Father of Love and Mercy, by God Himself. We see it in the blade of grass, in the weed by the roadside. We see it in the trembling leaf on the tree and in the noble form of the tree itself. We see it in the insect, in the fish, in the snowflake, in the grain of sand, in the mountain, in the globule of water. And last, but by no means least, we see it in the soul of man.

Is there anything in the whole universe that does not show forth song and beauty? But one thing, and that is sin; and sin is the breaking of God's law.

Man, knowing all this, realising all this, feeling all this,—shall he then want for words of praise, shall he lack prayers to help him on with a high resolve?

Earnest, soulful prayer must ever bring us into closer communion, into closer harmony, with the Absolute Source of Harmony; and so must bring to our troubled minds that blessed peace which nothing else can bring.

Bradley.—As the time for adjournment is at hand, I move that we now adjourn until this evening; and that the debate on this subject be then continued.

Quail.—I second the motion.

Valanti.—I offer an amendment that the debate close before adjournment at to-night's meeting; that at the close of debate each member record his vote, and be allowed fifteen minutes in which to give his reasons therefor; and that the president be allowed the remainder of any unexpired time for his closing remarks.

The amendment and motion were carried, and the meeting adjourned.



CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

REPORT of an adjourned meeting of the Twentieth Century Club, Sunday, May 21, 1899, 7.30 P.M.

Ezra arose and said: "Ladies and Gentlemen: This is an adjourned meeting. The debate before us is to close before the adjournment. Each member is to record his vote, and is permitted fifteen minutes in which to explain it; and the Chair is permitted any unexpired time for the closing reply.

"I call upon Mr. Valanti to record his vote, and to take the floor."

Mr. Valanti.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: I vote, "No." I am opposed to this proposed change because I believe that the Catholic Church is the proper and sufficient guide.

Assertive emphasis would have us believe that arguments in favour of the Catholic Church must necessarily be opposed to common sense, and that any and all arguments against it must necessarily be valid. Is such the case? Far from it, as we shall see. I will endeavour to show that the very contrary is the case. I will try to present tangible evidences which shall show that Catholicism is based on common sense and utility, and

that the arguments against it are pure inventions of feeble minds. In doing so, I shall try to avoid that line of abstract, speculative proof which, when adroitly marshalled in the field of logic, often makes the wrong appear the right. I shall not try to offer a theory as a substitute for a condition. I will submit facts which are patent, and which must be readily accepted by all fair-minded persons.

First of all, there is much mouthing about the Inquisition. What was the Inquisition? Was it not a method for the eradication of polytheism and of error? Will anyone say that polytheism is better than Catholicism? And was not polytheism abolished? Was it not abolished through the aid of the Inquisition? What quarrel, then, can there be with a method which substituted good for evil? That the method seems cruel is no excuse for that feeble-mindedness which exclaims against it. The application of the surgeon's instruments also seems cruel; yet objectors have as much right to complain of the latter as of the former on the score of cruelty. Both methods seem drastic; both were necessary.

It is a well-known fact that the Catholic Church busies itself to a great extent in the laudable work of educating the young. It has schools in every land,—everywhere. Into these schools are freely admitted children of all denominations. Now, is it not a fact that these schools are largely in demand by Protestants, by Jews, and even by Mohammedans? Why? Clearly because all who send their children to Catholic institutions feel that, in so doing, they securely guard their children against contagion from the evil influences in other than Catholic institutions. Is this not a fact? Who can deny it?

What other institutions in all the world can show such an untiring labour of love and self-sacrifice as that performed by the revered Sisters of Mercy? What other institution can show the zeal, the courage, the faith, the fidelity and the unselfishness that are shown by the Catholic friar, the monk, the brother, the priest and the missionary? The leper, the convict, the sick, the plague-stricken, the troubled, the sorrowing, the ignorant and the poor — do not all these receive their ministration?

The men and women of savage passions and of evil inclinations—will you curb them, subdue them, through science? Can we expect the thief to confess and make restitution through the symbol of a billet of wood? Can you stay the uplifted arm of vengeance through fear of a tube of water? Can you revive hope in the despairing heart of the sorrow-stricken by exhibiting a clod of earth? Yes, when absurdity and reality shall have changed places, when the vapourings of emptiness shall be called fact, and when truth shall deck itself in garments of falsehood and become a concrete lie.

What nobler, grander guide do we need than that which we now have? Shall we, indeed, discard the ever-loving, merciful Father for an indefinable, unconditioned unknowable? Have we not a sure guide in the divine teaching of an Augustine, an Ambrose, a Jerome and a Gregory? And high above these, as the heavens are higher than the earth, is the most blessed Redeemer. Is not all this sufficient?

Is not the blessed God, who gave His precious blood for our redemption, nearer to us than an abstraction, an automaton? Shall the evil ones on earth and the evil ones in hell at last find sanction for their evil? What kind of an uprooting would that be? O devilish

carnival, O hellish jubilee, we want you not ! God shall crush out such impious uprising, and shall keep watch over His Church and over His faithful ones here and hereafter.

Evil there is, but the evil is not of the Church; it is here in spite of her endeavours. Our place is within the Church, within the circuit of her endeavour. Then all, united, may, with one mighty effort, hurl Satan and his evil work from dominion on earth, and evil shall afflict us no more. Such is the true Central Theme.

Ezra.—Mr. Moore will now record his vote and take the floor.

Mr. Moore.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : I vote, " No." I vote that way because I cannot accept the theory submitted. Since it has been put forward, I have tried hard to frame the idea so that I could understand it. Up to now, I can only perceive it as a form of idolatry. I can only perceive some huge, inert substance, from which radiate great living tentacles, called laws.

Shall we then take this abstraction to our hearts, and drive from thence the living, loving, cognisable Saviour ? Shall we drive from within us the Redeemer whose life-giving sympathies we can feel,—the Redeemer who can understand, whom we can understand ; and put in His place an abstraction and a distraction ? By no means.

Much has been said about attributes. It has been said that whenever we apply any attribute to God in an affirmative manner we are committing idolatry. I do not think so. On the contrary, I think that when we say God is just, we all of us realise that God's justice is infinitely higher than our justice.

I agree with the first speaker in all he said in relation

to God, but I disagree with him in the high claim for the Romish Church. The Romish Church is one thing; Christ's Church is another. I agree with him when he says that "Evil is here," but I disagree with him when he claims to hold his church guiltless of bringing about that evil. No! Evil is not of the Church, the Protestant Church; but to say that it is not of the Romish Church is to ignore evident and palpable facts. It was the Protestant Church which built up freedom, through which have come enlightenment and inventions.

Christ, indeed, came to save and uplift; but Roman Catholicism came as a check and a hindrance and a block in the road. Give but sufficient temporal power to this institution to-day, and it would again restore feudalism, re-establish the Inquisition and destroy the inventor and his invention.

The evils that we now endure in government, in the social status, in economics, are largely the effects of her former pernicious activities. Time alone, and the further decline of this decrepit evil, this ancient impostor, will right the wrongs this Romish Church has wrought.

And we may hasten this event by strengthening the endeavour of Presbyterianism, of Christ's true Church. This is the remedy, this is the true Central Theme.

Ezra.—Mr. Quail will now record his vote and take the floor.

Mr. Quail.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am surprised that the two speakers who preceded me paid so little heed to what had been said by our worthy president. Whatever comment they made of a favourable nature was so blurred and indistinct as to escape my memory; but the unfavourable comments were intensely aggressive in distinctness.

Are they right? Is he right? These are the questions agitating my mind. How to determine which is right, is a problem. Who can determine it? Is it not most difficult for us to change our natures? How many years did it not take to build up within us the opinions we hold! Can we then eradicate the convictions born of experience and environment? Can our newer reason shake off the shackles of opinion, which hold us fast, the product of what we have thought and what we have done?

I try to do this; but, alas, I am too feeble, too helpless,—impotent! So I, like an infant that cannot yet walk, must, faithful to the nature of my being, crawl along feebly, holding on to things before me. Thus I progress slowly and painfully, with unsteady step.

Advancing thus in thought, I would say that the Scriptures tell us that John the Baptist was sent by God as the forerunner of Christ, to teach that all who would be saved must be regenerated through baptism, and that through this means man is again to become as a child and free from sin.

Christ confirmed what John had taught, and was Himself baptised by John, and taught His followers to continue this baptism for all time to come. But has this command been obeyed? Is it now obeyed? How then can we blame Christ for the evils under which we live, when we rebelliously refuse to obey His will?

Before we have a right to put aside what was given us, and to pronounce it worthless, ought we not first of all to try what obedience, what compliance would do? Have we tried, have we been exemplary Christians? Did Christ teach warfare among the nations? No; and yet the world is an armed camp.

Did Christ teach boss-rule? No; and yet we are

governed by political bosses. Did Christ teach usury and the withholding of the proper measure of wages? No; and yet these things flourish. Did Christ teach that Christianity meant the accumulation of vast quantities of gold and silver? No; and yet we see that these things are. Did Christ teach revenge, cruelty, deception and wrong? No; and yet these things are continually practised. What then? Can we not clearly see that the Baptist Church and Christ should be our Central Theme? Yes; and for this reason I must now record my vote against the system proposed, and in favour of Christ, the living God, the only Saviour and Redeemer.

Ezra.—Mr. Fisher will now record his vote and take the floor.

Mr. Fisher.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: If it were not for the existence and reality of suffering, how ludicrous all this would be! We are soberly told that because Adam ate an apple which he was told not to eat, God became angry, so angry that He determined on a plan for “getting even.” He was to even up this disobedience; but how? First, by punishing Adam and Eve and all their descendants,—which seems logical but cruel; and second, by making a martyr of Himself some four thousand years thereafter.

Not a word or a hint was given of this important and strange conclusion to such Bible worthies as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Melchizedek, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David and Solomon; although these men, we are told, were spoken to by God on all important matters concerning belief and conduct. Nor was there anything said about this matter to the children of Judah or Israel, or to any other people on the face of the whole earth. Yet we are soberly told that on the

accomplishment of this martyrdom, on the accomplishment of this suffering and death of God, and on belief in the same, depended and depends the earthly and heavenly happiness of every human being that has ever lived or shall ever live on this planet.

Was this act a necessary one for an almighty God? Could not such a God have availed Himself of other means and nobler? As an omnipotent and omniscient God, could He not have prevented Adam from eating the apple in the first place? As an all-merciful God, could He not have forgiven Adam? And, if God found it necessary to die for Adam's sin, in order to bring men to Heaven, why did He wait over four thousand years before doing so? Why were the countless hosts who died before He suffered on Calvary to be doomed to eternal torment?

When theologians tell us God did all this, do they mean by God, that Power which controls and governs the innumerable suns and countless worlds? In the vast ocean of infinite space, is not our entire earth like a mote in a sunbeam? Would an infinite, almighty God find it necessary to come down to this insignificant planet and die, in order to save a handful of Jews or Christians? Could He not have accomplished all this, and much more besides, by simply changing the hearts of men, or by changing the laws that govern them? Instead of performing the petty wonders reported, could He not have placed visible writings in the sky, declaring His will to the people in Latin, Hebrew, Greek, Sanskrit, Chinese and Japanese? Would not this soon have converted a world? And if what was done was necessary, was a necessity, then was not this necessity mightier than God?

Such, then, and much more besides, is the mass of

foolish and contradictory absurdities which are presented to us in the sober guise of truths to guide and direct our lives.

And how do they guide? Do we not see? Do we not see it in the horrible cruelties of an Inquisition? Do we not see it in a world of myriad bayonets, in millions of cannon, in fleets of warships? Do we not see it in a world of hypocrisy and double-dealing? Do we not see it in the millionaire cannibals who greedily devour the flesh and drink the blood of a toiling, groaning, trembling, suffering humanity?

O Baal, O Moloch of old, how puny, how feeble, how insignificant were your bloody stipends, when measured by the carnivorous, omnivorous, insatiable appetite of this personified cruelty!

The anguish of the goddess chained to the rock; the toil of him who, in Hades, ever pushed upward the stone that ever again rolled down; the suffering of the thirst-tormented shade who saw the tempting water ever escape his lips; the horrors of the hell painted in Dante's vivid colours—all these are as feeble vapouring of the poet's imagination when measured by the real evils and the actual sufferings of this earthly existence. And caused by what? By what but these miserable superstitions which still curse the earth with their presence?

In Hades the sufferers are supposed to be those who, while on earth and possessed of free will, chose to enact the rôle of monsters. Their punishment, therefore, seems reasonable; but here on earth, under the cruel and merciless rule of the gods, all suffer; especially the feeble and innocent. And why? In order that cannibals may thrive and riot and multiply.

They say, "Toss a cat as you may, it will always

land on its feet," and the same may be said of religions. There were the same grinding poverty and cruel suffering under Buddhism that there were under Brahminism; the same under Mohammedanism as under fetichism; the same under Catholicism as under Judaism; and the same under Protestantism as under Catholicism.

Members of each new and contesting creed assert, with vehement boastfulness, that many and singular ameliorations are due to that creed's Heaven-blessed endeavour. As smoke to the eyes, and as vinegar to the teeth, such are these boasters. They come with upturned eyes and open palms, masquerading as sympathisers with mankind; they concoct pleasing romances of the attainment elsewhere of that pleasure which cannibal cunning unjustly absorbs to itself here. And mark now the wonder! See how the slaves pay for their own enslavement!

That I may not seem to some to strain the truth in the charge, follow me to ancient Egypt and to Rome. There were then patricians and plebeians. And to-day, under Protestantism, in the United States, in the beginning of the twentieth century, what have we? The same patrician and the same plebeian. The patrician of old fed and clothed the plebeian by measure, and the measure was limited and barely sufficient to sustain the plebeian's wretched existence. And to-day is not the self-same measure used? Shall it always be so? No! The time of the awakening is at hand, the awakener is here.

They tell us that the Saviour was born in a stable, and that the Wise Men of the East came to worship Him. But was He not born in the retort, in the crucible, in analysis and in synthesis? Did not the Wise Men of the East and the West, of the North and

the South, come to worship Him? And is not His name Science?

Now comes this new scribe, this new Ezra, who would rear a new synagogue alongside the Temple, even the Temple of Science. A familiar and odious parasitic plant is to be engrafted on the tree of Science,—a parasite which is to absorb its wisdom, consume its vitality and deaden its energy.

Too late, O scribe! Too late, O Jonah! Too late, O Samson revived! You are indeed too late; you are behind the times. Had Roman Catholicism taken the course you now outline; had she taken this course in the palmy days of her power, it might then have succeeded. But now the long night of darkness is nearing its end, light is breaking and will soon shine forth, solemn, strong, clear as noonday, and forever; a light which shall expose the stupefying illusion of creeds and sects and gods and devils and heavens and hells. Then will all these things, together with demons and hobgoblins, be relegated to the archæological department of the museum, where, alongside the stone axe, the flint arrowhead and the mummy, they will remain as objects for the contemplation of the curious. And if anyone in the future seeks to take them from thence, again to worship them, he must first answer the following questions:

“Would an all-merciful God permit a trolley car to crush and mangle a pure, innocent and lovely child?”

“Would an all-merciful God permit the existence of scorpions, deadly insects, reptiles and ferocious beasts?”

“Would an all-merciful God permit the pitiless fire to consume innocent flesh? Would He permit the destruction by the unforeseen tornado? Would He

permit the forked lightning to lap up human life as a hungry cat laps milk ? ”

“ Why do the coal mine and the ocean and the miasmic field and the earthquake’s tremble take toll of human life ? ”

“ Why do the railway, the steamship and the trolley car demand their share of human life, and take it ? ”

“ Why do plagues, pestilences, fevers and ailments innumerable take whatever life they wish ? Why do they disdain to discriminate between the good and the bad ? ”

Is there any evidence here of an all-merciful God ? Answer, O priest ! Answer, O high priest ! Answer, I say ! Answer, ye gods ! Answer one and all ! Answer ? There is no answer. There are no gods. I vote, “ No.”

Ezra.—Mr. Bradley will now record his vote and take the floor.

Mr. Bradley.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: The remarks of the last speaker no doubt produced the same effect on you that they did on me. Though he spoke in a quiet, orderly manner, yet the effect of what he said was harsh and unpleasant in the extreme. I could well wish that his logic were less grounded in fact, that his conclusions were built on a feebler base. But for all that, he and the school of thought to which he belongs are by no means as repellent as they seem. They deserve a higher pedestal of respect than we are wont to place them on.

And now to digress for a short time. The inquirer and observer cannot fail to note that the human race appears to be largely composed of three main classes : the ignorant, the hypocritical and the supercritical. All three are extremes ; therefore they travel in acute

angles away from the truth. That this is a natural process in the law of development is obvious. The nature of ignorance inclines it to credulity ; the hypocritical, observing this tendency of the ignorant, turn it to their advantage. This characteristic action of the hypocritical, when observed by the supercritical, inclines them in the line of angular criticism, pointed, seemingly true, but in the last analysis true only in trend of destruction, and false in trend of construction.

Yet this supercritic has value, — sound intrinsic value ; for this iconoclast, this breaker of images, does true pioneer work. His work has the merit of clearing the path of brush and stubble. In this work he is invaluable.

This supercritic constructs for himself an ingenious lever. The credulity of the ignorant is his weight, the unprincipled activity or the knavish acquiescence of the hypocritical is his fulcrum. With a bar of Truth above the fulcrum, and with the lower end of the bar underneath the weight, he seeks, with one mighty effort, at the same time to crush hypocrisy and to hurl credulity into oblivion. So eager is he to do this, that he fails to see the danger of too vehement effort ; for too sudden an impulse may cause him to lose his grip on the bar of Truth which he employs as a lever. Thus, through the slipping in his grasp of the bar of Truth, all his purposes may be frustrated.

The true up-builder is of a higher order, of a finer, nobler organisation ; and the results of his labours are of infinitely greater value to humanity. The up-builder is given the God-like quality of employing Truth constructively, to build up for us a visible structure wherein we may abide in Hope, in Faith and in Charity. And have not these up-builders so worked

for us? Can we not perceive on every side, as a result of their building, a spirit of absolute justice, of absolute righteousness, pervading and permeating every law? Can we deny the existence and operation of this spirit? No, not so long as sane reason and sober judgment hold us under their harmonious dominion. And is not this spirit of absolute justice, of absolute righteousness, God?

That this most exalted being is invested by the ignorant with anthropomorphic qualities is true. That this low conception of God is the root and cause of almost all our earthly suffering is also true. But that happiness can be promoted by denying God, is not true. It is false. To deny the existence of absolute justice and of absolute righteousness would be contrary to the nature with which we are endowed. How is it, then, that the supercritic fails to see God? Is it not because he has failed to bring himself into harmony with God's spirit, so abundantly manifest in the Bible? He carps at the primitive legend and the traditional allegory, and by laboured effort shows us what they are. But he omits the endeavour to grasp the exaltation, the superlative excellence, which abound in the Bible for him who seeks them in humbleness of spirit and in single-mindedness.

Who is responsible for all this great lapse, this great error? Who but the hypocritical sophist, whose fear of harm or whose desire for gain prevents him from exposing error? If both are weighed in the balance of Justice, it is not the honest supercritic who will be found worthy of eternal damnation, but rather the dishonest hypocrite who, by his silent acquiescence or by his active approval, maintains dogmas which he believes and feels are falsehoods.

Dare such a one call God just or merciful, when the logical outcome of his dogmatism is injustice and cruelty? Can an all-just God be just to Catholics and unjust to Presbyterians? Can an all-merciful God be merciful to Episcopalians and unmerciful to Jews? Can an all-loving God love the Baptists and hate the Mohammedans? Out, damnable falsehood! Out from the minds of men! Out, separator, estranger, divider, destroyer, devil!

It is sacrilegious, blasphemous falsehood of this kind which has tarnished the natural good in man; which has robbed him of his rights, of his manhood. It has heaped infamy on the innocent, and degradation on the upright. It has maligned and robbed and stolen and tortured and murdered. If there be a Satan, a prince of evil, a devil, then let his name be changed to Religious Dogma. This it is which serves as the inducement to enlist the army of the ignorant, in order that they may be officered by hypocrites. This it is which is responsible for the atheist, which makes possible the pessimist and the anarchist.

And now a few words on the evidence which the last speaker marshals to prove, as he thinks, the non-existence of God. He asks whether an all-merciful God would permit the mangling of a child by a trolley car. Certainly not, for we are commanded to be careful, and human life is to be precious to us. Then shall not God intervene and cause all the universal laws to be suspended in order to rescue the child, or to save some from fire and others from danger of shipwreck? Would such an intervention be a display of mercy and of justice? Would it not rather be a display of magic and necromancy?

Would any of us desire to have God change His

nature to that of a magician ? No ; and so the order of things under which we live will teach us how we may best avoid loss of life through accidents or carelessness. And as for the serpents, the wild beasts, the fevers, the pestilences and the plagues, have we not learned to lessen these evils in the past, and may we not continue to lessen them in the future ?

And now, finally, I wish to record my vote on the question before us. While I see much of the high and noble in the presentation of our worthy president, I am yet impelled to cast my vote in the negative. I vote, " No." I vote in this way, because I believe we have already a sufficiency for right living here and for salvation hereafter. That sufficiency is the Bible, when the grosser interpretation of it shall have been removed. I likewise fear that the plan presented would, in practical application, be debased from its present seemingly high standard, and might be lowered to subserve the credulity of the ignorant, and the selfish interests of the cruel, the cunning and the wicked ; and that thus the new church might, in the end, accomplish more mischief than good.





CHAPTER XXXIX

THE MESSIANIC AGE

Ezra.—Ladies and Gentlemen : I am not at all surprised at the stand taken by the speakers who have preceded me ; it is in harmony with the law of conservatism. And it is well that this law operates ; for were it otherwise,—were opinions to change too rapidly,—there would be no stability.

Critical judgment, before it can accept any new opinion that differs radically from the old, must, I think, first modify or reject the old. And before such acceptance can be logically complete, all inconsistent opinions that bear any intrinsic relation to the new opinion must be adjusted to meet the change. Only thus can there be consistency and correspondence of thought throughout. To force one's self to accept new opinions otherwise is to take into the mind unassimilative matter.

In accordance with this proposition, you will see, by what follows, that it is as natural for me to propose this plan as for you, now, to reject it. The Jewish people, as you know, have for many centuries been possessed with the idea of a Messiah. A few among them, in the early history of Christianity, accepted Jesus as the Messiah ; but almost all the remainder preferred to

await the time when the Messiah nearer to their ideal and their aspirations was to appear.

Some among them centred their ideal on a divine warrior, on a mighty conqueror, who was to build up a great political institution, with Jerusalem as the Capital. Others believed that the Messiah was to be the spiritual head of the world, a sort of universal Pope. But a large number of the more thoughtful Jews conceived the idea that the people Israel was the Messiah, and that, in the end, this people was to be instrumental in bringing about a Messianic Age ; an age in which Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, heathen, pagans, all the world, were to become assimilated under a more perfect system of belief and a nobler social system than any that had theretofore prevailed.

To what extent the state of subordination in which the Jews were placed influenced them in this broader Messianic conception, I am unable to state ; but that it influenced them powerfully is evident. It was this idea, in the main, which made their terrible sufferings bearable, which preserved their solidarity, which buoyed up their hope, which enabled them to survive and to persist.

It is, therefore, perfectly natural for me, a Jew, to propose what I have proposed ; for the idea, as you can now see, did not come to my mind at a bound or with one effort. The idea of a Messianic Age is not only a conclusion that almost all my people now hold ; but, as you may perceive from what I have said, it is hereditary in us. But whether this idea, in the form in which it has been presented to you, would be more readily received by Jews at large than by you — that is another question. I am inclined to think that at first, in this form, it would be rejected by them as emphatically as

by you. Before there can be any critical acceptance of new opinions, as I said before, there must be a concurrent adjustment with such new opinions of the related opinions which control us. Fortunately, the ultimate acceptance of a truth does not demand general acquiescence at the start. It is sufficient if the truth is accepted by the few who, endowed with faith, energy and zeal, in time overcome opposition.

And now to the principal matter. In a series of meetings we have discussed the political, economical and social conditions under which we live. Underlying the themes themselves there seemed to exist, as a cardinal feature of our discussions, the hope that investigation would tend to mark out a path toward amelioration. Spurred on by the meagre and precarious returns which we receive for our daily labour,—returns which we deem below the limit of our legitimate needs, much below the limit of our ambition, and still farther below the limit of the rich, in the totality of the returns ;—stimulated still further by the knowledge of the obvious wall of social separation that surrounds us, and by the surmise that existing social and material inequality has its root in some cause not clearly discerned ;—thus animated, we began our inquiry by a discussion on government.

At its conclusion the logical outcome of the discussion indicated, as our next step, the investigation of the current industrial and social system. Here, as before, we could not find that plan of general amelioration which we sought. So, next in order, and in logical sequence, we took up the question of competition and collectivism ; and while this discussion likewise failed to supply a solution of the problem, it nevertheless indicated clearly that we could find a solution in the

theme that logically followed. That theme was the God-idea,—Religion.

We found that thought, idea, conduct, convention, impulse, tendency, emotion and will were more powerfully acted upon by the impelling power of Religion than by any and all other factors whatever. It is Religion that decides what is just, what is right, what is humane, what is charitable, what is merciful, what is neighbourly and what is unselfish. It is Religion that decides what such things are in their positive and in their negative forms. The question then necessarily drew us to an examination of the predominant religious systems. And we found :

First : That Christianity and Judaism were derived from the various interpretations of the Bible.

Second : That the Bible is composed of intermingled portions of inspiration, ethics, history, tradition, allegory and parable.

Third : That these portions are so interwoven as to make it almost impossible to distinguish between fact and allegory.

Fourth : These difficulties confront not only the uncritical, but the critical also.

Fifth : These difficulties can never be reconciled, because there was no grammar of the ancient Hebrew language, nor were any vowels employed ; and the vowels now supplied are of recent origin. Beside which, there are many synonymous words in ancient Hebrew. This difficulty and the absence of vowels render correct translation an impossibility.

Sixth : Each church adopted a certain version, infusing into it a meaning contrary to that of the other versions. This process created contradictory doctrines, which are the main root of error.

Seventh : These errors confuse the mind and lead it to wrong interpretations of justice, duty, equity, righteousness, mercy, fellowship and charity.

Eighth : The aim, object and end of the Old and the New Testaments is to teach us to love and obey God, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Ninth : God's laws are manifest in the things which are on the earth, in the water, in the air and in the heavens, and in the forces which pervade and permeate them.

Tenth : These manifestations can best be studied in an orderly and systematic manner. The study should begin at the earliest period of the child's development, and should be continued during all the period of human life.

Eleventh : To study, observe and contemplate the laws of God with due reverence, they should be so studied, observed and contemplated in the church, in the home, in the shop, in the field, everywhere, and at all times.

Twelfth : Such a course would in time elevate our standard of thought, idea, conduct, convention, impulse, tendency, emotion and will.

Thirteenth : Such a course would remove our present imperfect conceptions of justice, of duty, of equity, of righteousness, of mercy, of charity, of love, of humanity and of unselfishness.

Fourteenth : Such a course would greatly multiply human knowledge and human happiness.

Fifteenth : Such a course would tend to unite all the families of the earth in the bonds of fraternal love and in the love of God.

These things, then, were brought out as a result of our discussion, and are, as we see, at present rejected,

but yet are they not lost. It is now no longer in my power to remove this matter from your minds, even if I were inclined to do so. It will remain there as a seed planted in fertile soil. In due season the seed will sprout and bring forth ; if not in you, then in your children ; and if not in them, then in humanity, somewhere, some time.

Is there anyone with mind so dull that he can fail to take note of the wrong, the injustice, the inequality, the poverty, the misery and the suffering which exist ? Are there any so brutish as to feel no desire for a better, a nobler condition ? If so, then do these lack that feeling because God denied them spiritual activity. The problem of shaping conditions, the problem of human development, has been placed before man. It is for him to solve it, and on its solution depends his weal or his woe. It is in the struggle of this labour,—in this ever-continuous wrestling with the angels, the messengers, the laws of God,—that the mighty Israel, Humanity, shall in the end prevail. For in the day of victory, Humanity, like Jacob of old, shall grip the angel, the messenger, the laws of God, and shall not let go his hold until the angel, the messenger, the laws of God, shall have given him his blessing. And in that day shall man be emancipated and free. In that day shall flow for all the children of God the fountain of abundance, of peace and of joy.

Let us now observe that of the world's principal examples of pessimism there have been two which are remarkable :—the pessimism of the Buddhist and the pessimism of the ascetic Christian. Both sought a selfish Heaven ; both sought it selfishly. What were the earth, their country, their neighbours, their family, their very children to them ? Nothing. What they

prayed for, what they sighed for, what they longed for, what they fasted for, what they tortured themselves for, was a Heaven for themselves. Were I Keeper of Heaven, I would surely keep all such miserable, selfish creatures outside the gates, and would never permit one of them to enter.

Thank God that Israel was always optimistic ! Israel taught no eternal damnation ; he taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is for the righteous of all nations ; he taught that this earth is God's footstool, God's handiwork, therefore sacred ; he taught that all the people of the earth are brethren, and that God is the Father of all. Above all, Israel believed in his glorious mission ; a mission which was to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on this earth, and for all humanity.

It was this belief which gave Israel that exalted optimism during the centuries of his unparalleled trials and terrible sufferings. This optimism it was which lulled him to a peaceful sleep amidst terrors. And Israel slept peacefully on, undisturbed, unruffled ; and he still sleeps. But presently God shall again unseal his eyes, and Israel shall awaken, and lo ! he shall find himself in the loving embrace of all humanity. Then shall he no longer sleep, but he shall be awake as of old, full of zeal in the service of the Most High, and he shall teach man, as of old, " Love thy neighbour as thyself."

In contemplating the plan before us, and the vital changes which its acceptance would be likely to develop, it may not be inappropriate to draw attention to an illustration. The art of weaving is perhaps one of the oldest of all arts. It is likely that the first suggestion of weaving came from observing the bark of the cocoanut tree. From a primitive beginning, this noble

art has now culminated in the differentiating Jacquard loom, which produces designs scarcely less intricate than those produced by the direct operation of God's law. Consider such a perfected weaving machine at work, manipulated by an intelligent and skilful workman. Observe how responsive is each part of the whole ; how in time the design of the artist is realised in the finished product.

Bring forth another design, equally beautiful, and the raw material for its manufacture, and replace the skilful workman by one who lacks skill and experience; let him try to perform the work which the artist planned. What must be the result? What but tangled and broken threads, damage to the material and to the machinery, and imperfect work?

And is it not the same in the weaving of our social fabric? Is not the condition now that of a loom operated by an unintelligent, unskilful mechanic? It is true that the condition is better than in times past ; but how infinitely better could it not be were the general intelligence higher ! And what will exalt human intelligence to a higher plane than the reverent study of God as He is made manifest to us through His works?

There are to-day two great monopolies, two great aristocracies. One is the monopoly, the aristocracy, of wealth, and the other that of learning. Socialists and other reformers, whose laudable desire it is to enlist endeavour for amelioration, overlooking the monopoly of learning, urge that we employ coercive force against the monopoly of wealth. Puny efforts ! Do they not realise that intimidation, coercion or force will serve to no good purpose so long as the capitalistic antagonist finds aid and shelter behind the protecting walls of the aristocracy of learning ?

This is the citadel for conquest. Let all the people enter the noble field of learning. Let all the people possess themselves of the intricate secrets of God's law. Let them erase the dividing line ; let them destroy the monopoly of learning by themselves becoming learned. Scarcely shall they have accomplished this when, to their surprise, they shall see that not only the evil of which they justly complain, but many others overlooked, have departed of their own accord.

The inspired Psalmist of old, in speaking of idols, said, "Eyes have they, but they see not ; ears have they, but they hear not" ; and may it not be said of the people of to-day, "Ears and eyes have they, but they hear not, nor see God manifest in His law" ? Poets write, but the people cannot read ; painters paint, but the people cannot see ; writers set forth, but the people cannot comprehend. And because of this are they in slavery. Shall not the people become free ? Shall they not learn to hear, to see, to read, to write, to comprehend ?

What power is it, then, which would withhold light, intelligence, freedom ? Does not the voice of God utter speech ? Does He not speak to us in the mote that floats in the sunbeam ? Does He not speak to us in the wonders of organic life ? Is not the air peopled with His divine messengers ? Is there a place in the whole universe where His wondrous voice is not heard ? Is there an object in the world that does not contain a message to us from God ? The time will surely come when men shall wonder that argument was necessary to convince the people that it is for their interest to see, to read, to hear, to apprehend, and to comprehend.

We in our day go to museums ; we draw the attention of our children to the implements of the stone age,

and show them the kettles wherein cannibals prepared human flesh for food. We tell our children how much wiser and better are we than were the savages of old. But are we so much better, after all? Are there not millions of human beings compelled to exist in squalor, in degradation, in poverty, in sin and in misery? Why is this so? Is it because God is niggard in His blessing? Is the earth too small for us all?

No! The earth is large enough for ten or twenty times the number now upon it. The power is here, the resources are here, the willing hands to toil are here and the blessings of God are here, all in greater abundance than our needs require. But ignorance and hate and evil creeds and cruel dogmas are also here; and so long as these are here, slavery must be here also.

Must we, then, sit stolidly with folded arms and wait for freedom? No. God bids us to fight in His cause, and to fight zealously. Humbleness of station need be no bar to the fighter, for God graciously exalts the humble who, in sincerity and in singleness of purpose, put on the armor for the right and wield the sword valiantly.

If there be still any misunderstanding as to this presentation that I have made, if any feebleness on my part has prevented me from making clear to you this message, then I beg you to put aside what I have already said, and to consider only this, which I shall now say:

In place of contemplating the present systems of belief, and the resultant social system, look with your mind's eye upon a system under which all human life shall be true to Science, true to Art; not the cramped and warped science of the specialist, nor the narrowed art of the painter, the sculptor, the musician or the

handicraftsman, but that wider, grander, nobler Science, that higher, God-embracing, God-loving and man-serving Art born of Science and permeating every department of human interest. If such a system should prevail, what would then be the condition on earth? What but joyful harmony? We should then be in harmony with God's law and in harmony with God. And would there still be on this planet room for vice, for poverty, for hate and for discord? No; for God would then reign on earth, He would be King, and His laws would be our Eternal Messiah. Is the picture overdrawn? Who can say it is without doing violence to truth?

What, then, is Science? What but the sincere, faithful, honest interpretation of God's laws? And what is Art? What but the sincere, faithful and honest imitation of the manifestations of God's laws? And what endeavour can be nobler, grander or higher than to make such interpretation, such imitation, the common labour of all God's children?

This, then, it is, which was intended to be expressed in the theme I set before you. This it is which you have now rejected. Conservatism, itself a law of God, has prevented you from accepting it now. Time and further thought, however, may in the end cause you to change your minds. Or perhaps what I have now said may have already caused you to do so. Has it? If not the minds of all, then perhaps of four, or three, or two, or the mind of one? Signify it, then, O my friends, by again declaring your opinions on this most important matter.

Quail.—I move that we defer final action on the proposition of the president until the next regular meeting.

The motion was seconded and carried.

Moore.—I move that we do now adjourn, and that we discontinue the meetings until after the summer months, and that we hold our next regular meeting on Wednesday evening, September 20th.

The motion was seconded and carried.





CHAPTER XL

FAITH AND REASON

IN spite of the fact that Dorothy had listened with close attention to all that was said during these last protracted sessions of the club, she made no comments of any sort. Nor did she refer to the debate until the Tuesday following, when, shortly after breakfast, she entered the library and took a seat near my desk.

"I have come, Joseph," she began, "to have you make it all clear to me."

"Make what clear?" I asked.

"The debate. My mind is all confused."

"Oh, well," I said, "don't take it so seriously. In time your confused impression will wear off, and you will be as clear as ever."

Dorothy was evidently hurt by my reply. "I felt sure you could help me," she said.

I leaned back in my chair, and was silent for some minutes, seeking for words that would not come. At length I ventured: "You know, Dorothy, that for the most of my life I have paid little attention to the question of religion. In recent years, I have had a vague idea that there was some element of truth and some of error in every religion. Which was truth and which

was error I could not tell. This debate only brought out the more clearly my uncertainty. Herbert Spencer begins his *First Principles* by saying, 'We too often forget that not only is there a soul of goodness in things evil, but very generally also, a soul of truth in things erroneous.' "

"But, Joseph," said Dorothy, "surely that is no solution. It only increases my perplexity."

"How can I solve a problem that has not been solved by the wisest theologians?" I replied. "As I said, do not take it so seriously. We must bear in mind that we can make of life a tragedy or a comedy. Why should we borrow trouble and burden our minds with perplexities when there is no need?"

Dorothy, as if relieved by my reply, rose and walked toward the door. But she had taken only a few steps when she hesitated, then stopped short, sank upon a chair and burst into tears.

"Oh, Joseph," she said, amid sobs, "I am so sorry we heard those debates! They have taken from me my faith, and have given me nothing in its place. You are a man," she continued, more calmly, as she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes, "and your will is strong. I am only a woman. I need, my nature craves, spiritual faith and spiritual guidance. I feel that I should be unhappy if I were cast adrift, without that hope, that consolation, that guidance, which come from perfect faith in God."

"Why should you not have perfect faith in God?" I asked. "Was anything said at the meetings which disturbed your faith?"

"Yes," she answered, resuming her seat near me. "Don't you remember what that fierce-looking Mr. Fisher said? What sport he made of the most sacred

objects of belief ! How he scorned and laughed at God ! Don't you remember how the man Bradley accused the evangelical churches of idolatry ? Don't you remember the logic of the Jew Ezra, who by some diabolical art proved the Bible to be unintelligible and untrustworthy ? ”

“ But, my dear Dorothy,” I replied, “ you forget that these men were debating, each seeking victory for his own cause ; and we must not overlook the fact that in no instance, so far as I can remember, did one of them quote any authority to substantiate his assertions. May not Uncle Harry be right, after all ? Shall we take the bare statements of a number of irresponsible workingmen as of equal weight with the highest authority in the world ? Look around you here,” I said, pointing to the books scattered about the room. “ You remember we some time ago decided to take up the subject of religion as a study ? Why should you feel in this way before we begin ? There is no need for your present state of mind. We are still to be here for a week or two before we leave for the summer, and this time we can devote to study.”

“ I should prefer to give our summer vacation to this study,” said Dorothy, seriously, “ instead of going to any fashionable resort.”

“ A capital idea ! ” said I. “ And if we are to employ our vacation for this purpose, I can think of no place that will afford us better opportunity for uninterrupted study than the little cottage in Maine where I have sometimes spent my summers. You remember the spot, about two miles from Castine. I will telegraph to-day, if you like, and see if we can have it.”

“ Do so, please,” replied Dorothy. “ That will suit

me perfectly. Then we will look over the books and select what we need to take with us."

Accordingly it was thus arranged. I secured the cottage, made the necessary arrangements for our stay, and wrote my uncle and aunt, informing them of our plans. On Saturday, May 27th, we took the boat for Boston, remained in that city until Tuesday, and proceeded thence to Castine, where everything had been made ready to receive us.

The cases of books reached us the day after our arrival; and, having unpacked them, and having arranged one of our rooms as a sort of study, we were ready to begin our work. And the question at once arose, how to begin? Should we begin with the Bible and the commentaries, or with the history of the Reformation and with criticisms? We finally decided to begin with the Bible.

We had reached, in our reading, the end of the first chapter in Genesis, when Dorothy asked, "Do you think the word 'day' means a day of twenty-four hours, or does it mean 'an age'?"

"It seems to me to mean 'an age,'" I replied.

"How do you know?"

"I can give no authority," said I; "it is simply my opinion."

"Can you tell me," she continued, "how trees could grow before there was any sun?"

"Did they?" I asked.

"You read that on the third day God created trees, — vegetation; but this was before there was a sun."

"Well," I said, "if the word 'day' means twenty-four hours, it would seem to me quite as possible for vegetation to exist for a few hours without a sun at

that time as now; but if it means 'age,' then the vegetation must have been of the kind that grew in the carboniferous period, when the earth was still heated and when the air was filled with carbon."

"I see a few objections to both theories," observed Dorothy.

"What are they?"

"These: If 'day' means twenty-four hours, then vegetation could not have existed a single moment on the earth, for the prior absence of the sun would indicate the absence of heat. The earth's temperature would have been below zero, and plants could not have lived or remained green. Again, if 'day' means 'age,' and the vegetation created was like that of the carboniferous period, where did our vegetation come from?"

"I suppose it was evolved from low types."

"But that is the evolutionary theory; and if evolution is admitted in this instance, it cannot be denied in others."

"I do not deny evolution," said I; "do you?"

"How can I admit it, and still be a believing Christian?" she asked.

"I fail to see why you cannot. I cannot see where Jesus prohibited the belief in evolution, nor do I remember that He ever taught that we must believe in Genesis."

"You forget," Dorothy replied, "that Genesis is the foundation of the Christian Church. If Genesis be no longer accepted as a link in Revelation, the entire structure of the Christian Church falls to the ground. The very reason for the incarnation and suffering of Jesus is given in Genesis. He came to atone for the sin of Adam. If now we deny the validity of Genesis, we destroy the reason for the coming of Jesus and for

His suffering. This once admitted, we destroy Christianity."

"Well, then," I said, "why need you deny it? If you feel any comfort in believing in Genesis, and thereby preserving your faith in Christianity intact, why concern yourself with other theories that might tend to destroy that faith?"

"Joseph, I am surprised at you!" exclaimed Dorothy. "I never heard you talk in this way before. Your last argument seemed as if it came from a thorough Jesuit, instead of from my own husband."

"What else can I say?" I asked. "Your words led me to believe that you could not rest content without faith; and now, when I ask you to have faith, you call me Jesuit."

"But how can I have faith," said she, earnestly, "so long as I cannot reconcile my reason with that faith?"

"That reminds me," I remarked, "of another instance of things we cannot reconcile. You remember that when we had come home, after the eviction of the Schubert family, you told me you could not reconcile humanity and business; or, to put it in your own words, you could not 'make them fit.' Do you remember?"

"Yes," she replied, "I remember."

"Well, then, here are two instances where things cannot be reconciled; you cannot 'make them fit.' And the things are, faith and reason, and business and humanity."

"But may it not be, after all," added Dorothy, "that these things do fit, and that I am unable to make them fit simply because I am not in possession of the truth, because I am ignorant?"

"That question is the reason for our study," I answered. "We need hardly expect to reach a

conclusion as yet, for we have read but one chapter in the Bible. However, it is time to lay our study aside for the evening. We can resume it to-morrow where we left off to-day."

Our morning drive, the following day, took us to Castine, where, after doing various errands, we proceeded to the post-office to give orders concerning our mail. There we were surprised to perceive, among a group of gentlemen, an acquaintance of ours, a Mr. Harvey, who had been an occasional caller at our house in New York. He immediately advanced to greet us, and, after a brief conversation, begged to present to us a friend of his, a clergyman, who formed one of his party. This gentleman he brought up, and introduced as the Rev. Dr. Carroll, of Brooklyn.

"Dr. Carroll finds it quite a relief," observed Mr. Harvey, "to come up here where he can lay aside the harness, if only for a short time."

"No doubt the Doctor deserves his vacation," I remarked. "My wife and I are here for quite a different purpose. We have come to put the harness on."

"Indeed!" said the minister. "Does not your business allow you freedom for the summer?"

"It is not business," I replied. "My wife and I are studying theology."

"Ah! So you are a clergyman."

"No, Doctor. My wife and I are simply trying to find the solution to some questions that have presented themselves to us. We purpose devoting much of our time, during our stay here, to the inquiry."

"Have you brought any books with you?"

"Yes, quite a number."

"Perhaps I may be of use to you in your investigation. If so, I hope you will allow me to offer my services."

"Thank you, Doctor. I think we shall take advantage of your kind proposal."

"I am sure we shall," added Dorothy. "And we shall be very glad to see you at our house. Cannot you and Mr. Harvey dine with us some day soon?"

"I must leave here to-morrow," observed Mr. Harvey; "but if you are to be at home this afternoon, I will take that opportunity to call on you."

"Do so," said Dorothy. "And if Dr. Carroll has no other plans, and will come with you, I hope you will both stay and take dinner with us."

Our invitation was accepted, we bade the gentlemen good-bye and resumed our drive. "How fortunate that we met the Doctor!" exclaimed Dorothy. "No doubt he will be of the greatest help to us."

Late in the afternoon our visitors arrived. After some casual conversation Dorothy introduced the subject uppermost in her mind by asking, "Doctor, what do you think of the books we have selected?"

The clergyman rose, went to the shelves and glanced over the titles of the books. "A very fair collection," he said. "Is there any special point on which you wish to be informed?"

"I can hardly tell you that without giving an outline of the circumstances that led us to take up our study," replied Dorothy. "Joseph, will you explain the situation to the Doctor? I think you will be able to make it clearer than I could."

Accordingly I related briefly the story of our connection with the club, dwelling particularly upon the debate and its effect on Dorothy. The Doctor listened attentively. As I concluded, dinner was announced, and we rose to enter the dining-room.

During dinner our conversation touched only upon indifferent matters, but upon our return to the sitting-room, after the conclusion of the meal, Dr. Carroll resumed consideration of the principal subject by observing : " I am more than surprised at what you have told me. In the first place, I can hardly understand how you found it compatible with your position to attend these meetings of workingmen. It is true that some persons socially prominent do such things, but, as a rule, there is an ulterior motive of business or politics concealed behind their apparent fraternity. Even then, it is the man who does so, never the woman. In this case, however, there is an entire absence of interested purpose, and you are both actuated by the highest motives of humanity.

" So far, you deserve to be highly complimented. In following the dictates of your hearts and souls, you are rare exceptions to the general rule. I may almost say that your action stands without a parallel in this respect. Your hearts and souls, then, are of the highest order. But affairs of the head are to be looked at from another point of view, and from this point of view I think your action a mistake. Do not let me be misunderstood. I do not toady to the rich. I am in hearty sympathy with the poor. The best years of my life have been devoted to efforts for the amelioration of the condition of the poor. I am well acquainted with the hardships and the trials of poverty. I ought to know, for I came from the ranks of the poor myself ; and, besides, the congregation of which I am a minister is largely composed of mechanics. Labour for the amelioration of poverty I therefore deem a great and noble work. Such labour is one thing ; association with the rabble on a plane of equality is another. And

association with that nucleus of harm known as a workingman's social club is positively dangerous.

"In these clubs there is a constant babble of talk, without restraint of respect for law, without regard for the sacredness of religion. These barbarous gatherings indicate, more clearly than any other thing, the great depth of degradation to which things seemingly human may descend. But even here, in these dens of vice, in these broad avenues to perdition, there seems to lurk some remnant of shame. This gesticulating and almost soulless mass of savagery, as if to justify its unbridled licence, seeks to put on the garb of reason and logic. As a further cloak to its wanton audacity, it proposes a plan for some impracticable and impossible Utopia. Experience and unrestrained impudence have given these fellows a skill in sophistical argument, which is in the highest degree dangerous when employed on the simple and the susceptible.

"What I have said does not, of course, apply to workingmen's trades organisations, but refers to those social organisations where anarchy and socialism form the staple theme and motive."

"But, Doctor," said Dorothy, "the members of the club to which we refer seem to be earnest, well-behaved and thoughtful."

"That may be true," replied Dr. Carroll, "and again it may not be. It is highly probable that your presence at these meetings had an influence; and that during the time you were there they adroitly concealed from you that outward coarseness which would have driven you from thence at once. In their natural state of coarseness they are least dangerous as disseminators of contagion; it is only when they are able to conceal what they really are that they are most dangerous."

"Judging from my own observations," I said, "I think your judgment of these men is much severer than they deserve."

"I am also inclined to disagree with Dr. Carroll," remarked Mr. Harvey. "I believe that many of these men are earnest and thoughtful, zealous for what they believe to be the truth. Over-vehement, it is true, but even this quality is excusable, seeing that they try to convince minds so primitive. Such minds require vehemence and gesticulation in order that an idea presented may make an impression, however blurred the form in which it may be perceived. If we investigate, I believe we shall find that almost all reforms in the political and social world originated, and were at the start promulgated, by just such men.

"It may have been Spartacus, the Roman slave," continued Mr. Harvey, "who gave the impulse that in the end destroyed slavery. The Roman agitators for agrarianism may have instigated the work that resulted in the abolition of feudalism. The Hebrew prophet was in his day generally looked upon as an innovator and a social leveller. And there is no doubt at all that Jesus and His disciples, during the time of their earthly labours, were considered in that light by the conservative Jews. In view of all these facts, it is hardly fair to pass so sweeping a judgment upon the members of this club."

"Well," replied Dr. Carroll, "the proof of the truth may be found in experience. That the instances cited and the conclusions drawn by Mr. Harvey may be true, I do not deny; but it need not necessarily follow that what I have said is not also true. Let me give you an illustration.

"A few years ago, shortly after I had accepted the call to the church of which I am now minister, I had

occasion to observe a young man, a mechanic, who was a member of my church. He seemed an honest, sober and industrious young man. As he had a good voice, I induced him to join the church choir, and I took more than merely personal interest in his spiritual welfare. In course of time, however, I noticed that he became irregular in his attendance at services. I spoke to him about it, and for a time he continued coming regularly. He soon, however, began to come irregularly again, and finally he did not come at all. As he had removed from the neighbourhood, I lost track of him altogether. One day, unexpectedly, I met him in the street. 'Why do you not come to church any more?' I asked. He hesitated for a moment, and then said, 'Because I have no longer any faith in religion.' 'How is that?' I asked, in astonishment. 'Oh, well,' he replied, 'I have cut my eye teeth; I am a member of the "Liberal Club," and we have no use for religion.'

" 'Will you come to my study,' I said, 'and we will talk the matter over?' 'No, thank you,' he replied, and walked off. Turning suddenly, he came back, and added, 'If you wish, I can have you invited to address the club.' Believing that this might be instrumental in bringing him back to Christ, I told him that I would speak if invited. A short time thereafter I received an invitation, and I prepared an address for the occasion. At the appointed time I went to the place of meeting, which I found to be a dingy, foul-smelling, poorly-lighted room, situated over a saloon. The audience consisted of a motley crew of riff-raff; red flags were conspicuously displayed, and the air was filled with clouds of rank-smelling tobacco smoke which, together with the new sawdust with which the floor was covered, produced an odour almost unbearable.

“ The exercises of the evening began with a few remarks of the chairman, in which were jumbled together vile references to religion together with base aspersions upon the law and the nation. These remarks concluded, a woman arose and, waving a red flag, began singing some wild revolutionary stanzas to the tune of the *Marseilles Hymn*. This seemed to arouse much enthusiasm; the men arose, and in a vehement, boisterous manner joined in the chorus. This finished, a nervous, sallow-featured man delivered a ‘ five-minutes’ talk,’ for which he should, in my opinion, have been confined in a jail or in a lunatic asylum. It was, however, received with vociferous and tumultuous applause. The chairman then arose and introduced me as ‘ the speaker of the evening.’ What I said was received in respectful silence. Having concluded my remarks by an exhortation, I was about to take my departure, when the chairman said to me, ‘ Will you not remain for the responses, and to answer the questions?’ ‘ Very well,’ I replied, ‘ I will remain.’ Several persons thereupon arose simultaneously, in various parts of the room, and each, as he received permission to speak, opened out a torrent of vile detraction of religion, so vile and obscene, indeed, as to make even the word blasphemy seem innocent. When a certain number had spoken in this strain, they began the ‘ questions.’

“ For a few moments I stood up and tried to answer, but finally, perceiving that this was a real Sodom, an actual Gomorrah, I hastily left the hall, followed by cat-calls, jeers and laughter.

“ By what process of thought can we connect frequenters of such brutal gatherings with the true reformers? If there be any connection, I fail to see it.

“ A few months thereafter I was surprised to receive

a visit from the mother of the young man of whom I have spoken. Amid sobs, she begged of me to go with her to the police court to say a few words as to the former good character of her son, who was under arrest, and on trial on the charge of manslaughter. I went, and was instrumental in having the sentence mitigated.

"How could I, therefore, view your attendance at such a club but with surprise?"

"I am still of opinion, Doctor," I said, "that you are in error as to the character of the men composing this club. You have known me only since this morning, but even from that short acquaintance you would surely conclude that I would not attend the kind of meeting you describe,—least of all would I take my wife there. I tell you, Doctor, that the men composing the Twentieth Century Club are orderly, law-abiding, intelligent American citizens, as patriotic as you or I; and, I do not hesitate to admit frankly, much higher in the scale of intelligence than I am.

"Here," I continued, "you may judge for yourself"; and, going to the bureau, I took from thence a copy of the report of the last debate, and handed it to him. The Doctor took the report and began to scan its contents rapidly. In a moment or two he exclaimed: "I thought so," and, turning the page down, he read, "O Baal, O Moloch of old, how puny, how feeble, how insignificant were your bloody stipends, when measured by the carnivorous, omnivorous, insatiable appetite of this personified cruelty!" "Yes," he said, "the adjectives are here, almost identically as I heard them at the Liberal Club."

"Your criticism is hardly fair," observed Dorothy; "for other statements by the same speaker are in a

less vehement tone. Besides, there are other speakers whose remarks are conservative and even orthodox."

"Dr. Carroll," said I, "I should be glad to have you criticise the summary of the last speaker, especially from propositions one to seven inclusive."

"Very well," he replied; "but in order that I may do so to the best advantage, may I ask you to lend me this copy for a few days? I will return it with my comments."

"Certainly. Return it at your convenience," I said. The Doctor thanked me, rolled up the report, placed it in his pocket and rose. Mr. Harvey rose also, and in a few moments both visitors had departed.

On Friday morning we received a note from Dr. Carroll to announce that, if convenient to us, he would call on Saturday. "I have prepared a complete refutation of the propositions contained in your club report," he went on to say, "and you may rest assured, my dear friends, that your faith will be completely restored — I even hope that it may be strengthened."

"How glad I am that we had the good fortune to meet the Doctor!" exclaimed Dorothy, as she laid down the note.

The following afternoon the clergyman was announced, and my wife, whose face bore an expression of happiness and content, went forward and greeted him cordially. We all proceeded to the study, and were scarcely seated when the Doctor, drawing from his pocket the report, began: "I must first acknowledge an error in my judgment of the men composing the club. The report leads me to accept your version, and to believe that these are studious and intelligent men, above the average for workingmen.

"But we must not conclude that they, or any of

them, are to be accepted as authority. They give but their own opinions ; and in so weighty a matter personal opinion is of little value — no, not even the opinion of one who has devoted a lifetime to the study of theology. Of how much less value, then, is the opinion of men who have spent the greater part of their lives in daily labour, as mechanics ! And now to the propositions one to seven in the summary of the last speaker :

“ The first is as follows : ‘ That Christianity and Judaism were derived from the various interpretations of the Bible.’

“ This is true of Christianity only in a limited sense, and so far as some quotations from the Old Testament are concerned. It would be nearer the truth to say that both systems are the result of revelation. Christ came on earth for the express purpose of manifesting His will. This will is manifest in Christianity. Christ established His Church on earth before there were any such books as the New Testament. This Church could not, therefore, have been founded on interpretations of the books of the New Testament, because no such books were in existence at the time.

“ Second : ‘ That the Bible is composed of intermingled portions of inspiration, ethics, history, tradition, allegory and parable.’

“ That is true.

“ Third : ‘ That these portions are so interwoven as to make it almost impossible to distinguish between fact and allegory.’

“ That is not true, for what is given as allegory or parable is stated to be such, and there is no room for any misconception. This remark, of course, likewise answers the fourth proposition.

“ Fifth : ‘ These difficulties can never be reconciled,

because there was no grammar of the ancient Hebrew language, nor were any vowels employed ; and the vowels now supplied are of recent origin. Beside which, there are many synonymous words in ancient Hebrew. This difficulty and the absence of vowels render correct translation an impossibility.'

" This fifth proposition is a common stock argument of atheists, and is of very little value. It is true that there is no grammar of the ancient Hebrew language ; fortunately there is no necessity for one, so far as the authenticity of the Bible is concerned. The Old Testament was translated into Greek several centuries before Christ, in the version known as the Septuagint. This translation was made by men thoroughly versed in Hebrew and Greek, under the command of one of the Ptolemies. That the translation was authentic is conclusively shown by the fact that the Jews in Egypt acknowledged it as of equal authority with the original Hebrew version.

" There was also another translation into Greek made at a later time by Aquila, which is even at this day pronounced by orthodox Jews as authoritative. All this you may verify from the articles on the Bible in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and from *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, which I see on your shelf.

" If my statements are facts, they will, of course, likewise refute proposition seven. That they are true is evident ; for to say that these translations lack authenticity on account of lack of comprehension of ancient Hebrew, is to say that the ancient Hebrews did not understand their language.

" You may therefore judge for yourself, Mrs. Morton, whether you should take seriously what was said at these debates."

My wife had listened with intense interest as the clergyman proceeded. To the question with which he concluded his remarks she replied, fervently: "I thank you, Doctor. I shall always be under obligations to you. You have restored my faith."

"And now, Doctor," I said, "since I wish to leave no room for any doubt hereafter, will you be kind enough to explain a difficulty which confronted us in reading the first chapter in Genesis? We read there that God created plant life the day before He created the sun. How could that be?"

"If that seems wonderful to you," he replied, "how much more wonderful was it for Him to create anything! Was it less wonderful to create an insect, an atom, a tree or a world, than that plants, by His will, should live a few hours without the sun?"

"In accepting this suggestion, do not for one moment labour under the impression that you are forced to accept what some term transcendent ideas, while science, on the other hand, offers what are termed rational ideas. There is much attraction for the mind in what is termed 'rational,' but there is much more of the rational in the idea of creation as set forth in the Bible than in the theory of creation by evolution, or, as it is termed, the nebular hypothesis.

"And now," said the Doctor, rising, "I must say good-bye. I leave for home on Monday, and I have been obliged to make another appointment for this afternoon."

My wife and I again thanked him, and expressed a desire that he call upon us in New York. He replied that he would be glad to do so, and took his departure.

"Well, Dorothy," said I, as Dr. Carroll left the room, "have your difficulties been removed?"

“ I believe as firmly now as I did before attending the meetings—more firmly,” she replied. “ Ever since then, I have been living in a sort of nightmare. I am glad that the darkness has disappeared, and that light has come.”

Nothing more was said, and, by some tacit understanding, we discontinued our investigation on the subject of religion ; and, instead, began the reading of a work of fiction.





CHAPTER XLI

SOME AUTHORITIES

SOME weeks passed without special incident, until one day I received the following letter :

“NEW YORK, June 15, 1899.

“MR. JOSEPH MORTON,

“CASTINE, MAINE.

“*Dear Sir* : Enclosed please find statement of the Committee on Charity, also a report of the work done. I am acting as temporary secretary, as Miss Selner is in attendance on her brother Ezra, who is confined to his room with fever. He was quite low last week, but I found him somewhat improved last night.

“He told me to inform you that he had made a collection of some authorities to substantiate the views which he set forth at the meeting, and requested me to send them to you. This I have done by to-day's express.

“Yours truly,

“FREDERICK FISHER,

“Temporary Secretary.

“P.S.—The references are annotated, and the pages are turned down.”

This letter I read aloud to Dorothy. “Don't you think we have had enough of this question of religion?” I asked.

"Yes," she answered. "I would rather not begin to discuss it again."

The following day, as I was about leaving the house, a package arrived which seemed to be the one mentioned by Fisher. I did not open it, but left it in the study and proceeded on my walk. I was gone perhaps two hours. On re-entering the house, I was surprised to find Dorothy sitting at the study table absorbed in reading. Various books were scattered before her, and on the floor at her side lay the brown paper wrapping of the package.

She looked up as I entered. "I opened your bundle," she said. "I wanted to see what was in it. Here are the books. You may take them; I do not want them."

"Very well," said I. "I don't care for them either. I will wrap them up and return them." And I gathered them together, preparatory to making up the package.

Dorothy looked on meditatively. "Joseph," she observed, "do you think there would be any harm in just looking over the titles of the books, or in reading a few of the marked places?"

"I would rather you did not."

"Why?"

"Oh, well, because I prefer not," I said; for no other reason came to my mind.

"You are unkind, Joseph," she replied, in a voice tremulous with suppressed emotion, as she rose and walked toward the door.

I hurried after her, and took her hand. "Forgive me, Dorothy, for seeming rude; but the truth is, I am afraid to give the books to you."

"Why are you afraid?" she asked. "Surely our

faith must be built on a very weak foundation if we are afraid to look at a few books for fear of destroying it. Besides, I did not like your way of refusing."

"Very well, Miss Curiosity; take the books. But don't blame me if you lose your faith a second time."

Dorothy broke out into sobbing. "No, Joseph, I will not touch them unless you read them with me."

"Ah!" said I, smiling; "so you are not willing to see me go to Heaven alone. If this diabolical reading causes you to forfeit your right to Heaven, you want my company in the other place. Very well, I am yours here, and shall be yours in either place hereafter."

"How funny you are, Joseph!" she said, as she dried her eyes and came over to seat herself beside me at the table.

I picked up the book that lay nearest me, and, opening it at random, read:

"All untrammelled scientific investigation, no matter how dangerous to religion some of its stages may have seemed for the time to be, has invariably resulted in the highest good both of religion and of science."

"Who wrote that?" asked Dorothy.

I looked at the title-page. "Andrew Dickson White, in *The Warfare of Science with Theology*."

"That seems harmless enough," she remarked; "read some others."

I took up another book, and opened it at the page turned down. There I observed the following note in pencil: "Authority to prove the correctness of propositions one to seven inclusive, in my closing remarks."

"Why!" cried Dorothy, in startled surprise, "those are the propositions that were submitted to Dr. Carroll."

"Yes," I replied. "If Ezra can sustain his position, it will overthrow the defence of the Doctor."

“Can he, do you think?” asked Dorothy, in excitement. “But please read,” she added, nervously.

“Besides the causes of ambiguity common to and inherent in all languages, there are certain others, peculiar to the Hebrew, from which many extraordinary difficulties arise.

“For example, Alpha, Ghet, Ghain, He, are called gutturals, and without any distinction, any at all events known to us, are used one for another. El, again, which generally signifies to, towards, is often used for hgal, which commonly means above, and *vice versâ*; whence it comes that the whole of a sentence is often rendered of doubtful import, or made to look as if it had no meaning at all.

“A second source of ambiguity exists in the numerous meanings that are attached to the Hebrew conjunctions and adverbs. For example, Vau serves indifferently for conjunction and disjunction, and signifies but, because, then, and however. Ki has seven or eight significations: wherefore, although, if, when, inasmuch, as, because, combustion, etc.; and so almost of all particles.

“The third source of doubt, and it is a very fertile one, consists in this, that in the indicative mood, verbs want the present tense, the preterite imperfect, the preter-pluperfect, the future perfect, and various other tenses of most common use in other languages; in the imperative and infinitive moods, verbs have nothing but the present, and they are altogether without the subjunctive.”

“What is this quoted from?” inquired Dorothy.

“From the *Tractatus*, by Spinoza,” I replied.

“Is he regarded as a writer of authority?”

“Let us see,” I said. “We will look him up in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Yes, here is an account covering some four and a half pages concerning him. He seems to have been a pantheistic philosopher of high standing.”

I proceeded to read, from page 156:

"Besides the three causes of obscurity now noted in the Hebrew language, there yet remain to be mentioned two others, each of much more moment than all the rest. The first of these is, that the ancient Hebrews wrote without vowels and accents. The moderns supplied vowel-points and accents, as it seemed good to them that the Bible should be interpreted; wherefore they are to be regarded as mere interpolations of yesterday, and deserve no greater faith, as they have no higher authority, than the lucubrations of ordinary commentators."

"By whom is this?" asked Dorothy.

"By the same author, from the same book, the *Tractatus*."

"Do you believe that he is correct?"

"I do not know; but let us proceed further. On page 201 he says:

"'The resemblance of one Hebrew letter to another is, in fact, an ever recurring question, when there is any room for doubt, whether ב Bet or כ Kaf, י Jod or ו Vau, ד Dalet or ר Res, etc., is the proper letter to be used; and as these are among the most constantly employed in the language, it frequently happens that either indifferently will make tolerable sense with the context.'"

"I am glad that you told me that this Spinoza was a pantheist," said Dorothy.

"Why?"

"Because his assertion cannot have the same weight as that of a Christian clergyman, like Dr. Carroll.

"Ezra must have based his conclusion," she continued, "on the authority of this Spinoza, who claims, as you have just read, that ancient Hebrew had no vowels. Preposterous and absurd to think that a written language should have had nothing but consonants. Why, let me see. If the letters a, e, i, o and u, and sometimes w and y, were absent, we could

then take 'pt' for pat, pet, pit, pot, put, pati, pity, puty, apt, piety, piet, picta, pate, patee, patio, patoo and pout. What an opportunity it would afford for our lawyers, if contracts were drawn up in consonants only! A single paragraph could be interpreted in several hundred different ways. How was it possible to translate the Bible with such a stumbling-block in the way? Surely this pantheist Spinoza must have misled Ezra. Do you not think so?"

"I cannot say," I replied. "We shall have to look it up."

"Do keep on reading," said Dorothy. "This is growing interesting."

Turning to the next page, I perceived some sheets of paper on which appeared to be various notes in the handwriting of Ezra. They began as follows:

"As you may not be acquainted with the standing of Spinoza, you will find corroborative evidence of his statements in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and in the *American* and *Chambers's Encyclopædias*. I refer to these because you are more likely to find them in Castine than other books on the subject, and they are quite as authoritative as any others."

"Why, those are the same books that were cited by Dr. Carroll," observed Dorothy. "Don't you remember?"

"Yes, but we failed to avail ourselves of his suggestion, and have not looked them up."

"Let us do so now," she said.

"Very well. Ezra's first reference is the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. iii., page 640." And, going to the shelf, I took down the volume, and read:

"Semitic alphabets have no full provision for distinguishing

vowels, and the oldest writing, before orthography became fixed, was negligent in the use even of such vowel letters as exist. For a long time, then, not only during the use of the old Phœnician character, but even after the more modern square or Babylonian letters were adopted, the written text of the Bible was consonantal only, leaving a certain scope for variety of pronunciation and sense. But even the consonantal text was not absolutely fixed. The loose state of the laws of spelling and the great similarity of several letters made errors of copying frequent. The text of Micah, for example, is often unintelligible, and many hopeless errors are older than the oldest versions."

"Ezra seems to be right," remarked Dorothy.

"So I think."

"But," she continued, "he has not mentioned the translation into Greek by command of the Egyptian King Ptolemy, made several centuries before Christ, of which Dr. Carroll spoke."

"Yes," I replied; "on that point he refers us to page 641 of the same volume":

"Versions of the Old Testament became necessary partly because the Jews of the Western Dispersion adopted the Greek language, partly because even in Palestine the Old Hebrew was gradually supplanted by Aramaic. The chief seat of the Hellenistic Jews was in Egypt, and here arose the Alexandrian version, commonly known as the Septuagint or Version of the LXX., from a fable that it was composed, with miraculous circumstances, by seventy-two Palestinian scholars summoned to Egypt by Ptolemy Philadelphus. In reality there can be no doubt that the version was gradually completed by several authors and at different times. The whole is probably older than the middle of the second century B.C. We have already seen that the text that lay before the translators was in many parts not that of the present Hebrew. The execution is by no means uniform; and, though there are many good renderings, the defects are so numerous that the Greek-speaking Jews, as

well as the large section of the Christian church which long depended directly or indirectly on this version, were in many places quite shut out from a right understanding of the Old Testament.'"

"Ezra seems to be right again," observed Dorothy.

"I agree with you," I replied.

"But," she added, "all this refers to the Old Testament. No such inaccuracies could have occurred in the New Testament, for it was written in Greek."

"On that question," said I, consulting Ezra's notes, "he refers us to page 643 of the same volume. It reads :

"Can we say of all the New Testament books that they are either directly apostolic, or at least stand in immediate dependence on genuine apostolic teaching which they honestly represent? Or must we hold, with an influential school of modern critics, that a large proportion of the books are direct forgeries, written in the interest of theological tendencies, to which they sacrifice without hesitation the genuine history and teaching of Christ and his apostles?"

"This statement surprises me ; does it not you ?" remarked Dorothy.

"No, for I have all along had an idea that Ezra was correct in the main."

"Then why have n't you said so before ?"

"Because I preferred not to disturb your mind."

"How could you be so cruel, Joseph," said Dorothy, reproachfully, "as to withhold the truth for fear of disturbing my mind ? Is my mind so feeble ? Or do you treat it so tenderly because I am a woman ? Has a woman so weak a mental constitution that she may only be fed on skimmed and diluted intellectual food ?"

"No," I replied ; "that was not my reason. The real reason was this ; let me read it to you. Ezra

states it in the second paragraph of his remarks which close the debates.

“Critical judgment, before it can accept any new opinion that differs radically from the old, must, I think, first modify or reject the old. And before such acceptance can be logically complete, all inconsistent opinions that bear any intrinsic relation to the new opinion must be adjusted to meet the change. Only thus can there be consistency and correspondence of thought throughout. To force one's self to accept new opinions otherwise is to take into the mind unassimilative matter.”

“What does that mean?” asked Dorothy, with a look of perplexity.

“It means that for you to attain a realisation of the truths pointed out by Ezra, it would have been necessary for you, at the start, to cast aside your faith.”

“But that would have made me an infidel!” she exclaimed.

“In a narrower sense, yes,” I replied; “but in the broader sense, no. No truly spiritual being can become untrue to its spiritual nature; it cannot become infidel. It can only — during the period of transition from its old to its new opinion — become sceptical, or, rather, critical.”

“I see!” exclaimed Dorothy. “Then why did you prevent that transition?”

“Because such a state is very painful for those who fail to grasp its true meaning. I therefore kept the fact from you to avoid giving you pain.”

“So you knew the truth all the while, did you, Joseph?” said she, in a low voice.

“Oh, no. I must have admitted much more than I should. I do not know the truth; no mortal can ever know the truth. I only surmised that Ezra was nearer the path of truth than was the clergyman.”

"How enigmatical you are!" Dorothy exclaimed. "I understood you to say that Ezra had discovered the truth, and that you, too, knew the truth; and now you tell me that no mortal can ever know it."

"Evidently I have failed to make myself clear," I replied; "but I will try to do so now. In my opinion, the highest truth the human mind is capable of grasping is the fact that we can never know absolute truth. To arrive at a full consciousness of this knowledge requires the exercise of all our intellectual faculties, and this full consciousness is reached only at the cost of the greatest pains."

"But after we have acquired this truth, of what value is it?" asked Dorothy. "Will it not then have transformed us from believers in God into agnostics?"

"No. An agnostic believes that he does not know that there is a God; but those of whom I speak are devout believers in God. In fact they, like Ezra, most frequently affirm that God is the only absolute entity."

"How do they reach that conclusion, and what evidence have they to offer for their belief?"

"These believers reach their conclusions," I answered, "through the study of phenomena, through observing the things on the earth, in the air, in the water, in the heavens. They likewise observe the relations between inorganic and organic matter and all affairs relating to humanity; all these phenomena they call manifestations of God's laws, and these they offer as proofs of God's existence."

"Would the people accept such a belief?"

"People of primitive minds would not," I replied; "but to people of high spiritual inclination such a belief would be and is acceptable, because any other belief is idolatry or falsehood."

"You mean," observed Dorothy, "that God does not ask us to busy ourselves about His form or how He looks."

"Yes, that is just what I mean," I said. "For that reason He gave the commandments 'Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them.' This, of course, implies that we should also rigorously abstain from creating any mental image of God. God denied us the power to represent Him, and if we try to do so, it is against His will; we then disobey Him, and are idolaters."

"What does God ask us to do?" Dorothy inquired.

"He asks us to 'love our neighbour as ourselves,'" I replied.

"It seems, then, from what you say, that we are just reversing God's law. He tells us not to speculate about His nature, and our clergymen not only do this, but they boldly open the doors of Heaven, — they are as much at home with God as a guest with a hotel proprietor or a customer with a storekeeper. Then again, we are told to love our neighbour as ourselves; but from what I know of business methods, we more usually love to outwit our neighbour, and we take good care to prevent him from doing the same to us."

"Yes," I said, "you have stated the case with fair fidelity, and a brief summary would leave it in this form. God asks us not to speculate about His nature, and to love our neighbour as ourselves; but we speculate about the nature of God, and do not love our neighbour as ourselves."

"We are therefore breakers of God's law?"

“ Yes, and that is what Ezra calls idolatry.”

“ Does Ezra say anything else in his notes ? ” asked Dorothy.

“ Yes, he refers me to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xv., for information on Maimonides ; then desires me to read from a book by Maimonides, which he sends, entitled *Guide of the Perplexed*. Let us first look at the *Encyclopædia*, page 295 ” :

“ Maimonides (1135 to 1204). Among the great men to whom Mohammedan Cordova has given birth. He was master of Greek Arabic Philosophy.”

“ That is perhaps enough to know of the author. Now for his *Guide of the Perplexed*. We are first referred to page 5. There the author, speaking of the synonyms and homonyms of the Hebrew language, says ” :

“ Of their several meanings the ignorant choose the wrong ones ; other terms which are employed in a figurative sense are erroneously taken by such persons in their primary signification.”

“ I will select a few examples from among the many in the book to which Ezra refers us,” I continued.

“ First, on page 47 ” :

“ אִישׁ 1. Man. 2. Male. 3. One (—the other).

“ אִשָּׁה 1. Woman. 2. Female. 3. One (—the other).

“ אָח 1. Brother. 2. (one—) the other.

“ אָחוּת 1. Sister. 2. (one—) the other.”

“ Again, on page 48 ” :

“ יָד 1. To bear. 2. To create. 3. To produce. 4. To cause to happen. 5. To infer. 6. To teach.”

“ On page 53 ” :

“ כִּסֵּא 1. Throne. 2. Emblem of royalty. 3. Greatness.”

“ On page 54 ”:

“ עלה 1. To go up. 2. To rise. 3. To act in reference to superior beings.

“ ירד 1. To go down. 2. To fall. 3. To act in reference to inferior beings.”

“ On page 60 ”:

“ קום 1. To stand. 2. To be confirmed. 3. To stir.”

“ On page 62 ”:

“ עמד 1. To stand. 2. To cease. 3. To last.”

“ On page 66 ”:

“ צור 1. Rock. 2. Flint. 3. Quarry. 4. Origin.”

“ On page 76 ”:

“ עבר 1. To pass. 2. To sound. 3. To appear. 4. To transgress. 5. To miss.”

“ On page 96 ”:

“ רגל 1. Foot. 2. Suite. 3. Cause. 4. Effect.”

“ On page 103 ”:

“ אכל 1. To eat. 2. To destroy. 3. To learn.”

“ On page 135 ”:

“ פנים 1. Face. 2. Anger. 3. Presence. 4. Before (place). 5. Before (time). 6. Attention.”

“ These examples of ambiguity and obscurity in the Hebrew language,” said Dorothy, “ seem to corroborate the statements of Spinoza.”

“ They certainly do,” I replied ; “ and I begin to perceive that any and all versions of the Bible, together with any and all commentaries, are unquestionably

human, and have been made to lean toward the opinions and interests of the interpreters and commentators."

"But if what you say is true," observed Dorothy, "there is an end of Scripture inspiration, is there not?"

"No; not at all," I answered; "for, as Ezra says in his eighth proposition, 'The aim, object and end of the Old and the New Testaments is to teach us to love and obey God, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.' This is the text, and the works of God are, or should be, the commentary, the study. Instead, interested theologians and politicians have given us creeds and dogmas. In the stead of substance they have given shadow, and they seem to me to have obscured the true light and to have caused the people to live in darkness."

"If so, it follows that these theologians were the incarnation of wickedness."

"Not necessarily," I replied. "Your conclusion would be correct only if we could assume that theologians in general were always wise and just. History shows, however, that theologians in no way differ from other people in respect to the law of development; hence we may infer that what they taught they believed to be true.

"Ezra refers us next," I continued, "to page 219 of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, where we shall find some remarks on Attributes. The quotation is as follows":

"If slander and libel is a great sin, how much greater is the sin of those who speak with looseness of tongue in reference to God, and describe Him by attributes which are far below Him; and I declare that they not only commit an ordinary sin, but unconsciously at least incur the guilt of profanity and blasphemy."

"Page 215 of the same book is next referred to":

“By affirming anything of God, you are removed from him in two respects; first, whatever you affirm is only a perfection in relation to us; secondly, He does not possess anything super-added to the essence; His essence includes all His perfections, as we have shown. Since it is a well-known fact that even that knowledge of God which is accessible to man cannot be attained except by negations, and that negations do not convey a true idea of the being to which they refer, all men, both of past and present generations, declared that God cannot be the object of human comprehension, that none but Himself comprehends what He is, and that our knowledge consists in knowing that we are unable truly to comprehend Him.”

“Ezra’s next reference,” I continued, “is Herbert Spencer’s *Synthetic Philosophy*, page 45, the first paragraph. This, he says, will give us an idea of how polytheism may be distinguished. I will read the paragraph”:

“The Polytheistic conceptions in their advanced phases represent the presiding personalities in greatly idealised shapes, existing in a remote region, working in subtle ways, and communicating with men by omens or through inspired persons; that is, the ultimate causes of things are regarded as less familiar and comprehensible.”

“On the subject of monotheism Ezra refers us to the next paragraph on the same page”:

“The growth of a Monotheistic faith, accompanied as it is by a denial of those beliefs in which the divine nature is assimilated to the human in all its lower propensities, shows us a further step in the same direction; and however imperfectly this higher faith is at first realized, we yet see in altars ‘to the unknown and unknowable God,’ and in the worship of a God that cannot by any searching be found out, that there is a clearer recognition of the inscrutableness of creation. Further developments of theology, ending in such assertions as that ‘a God understood would be no God at all,’ and ‘to think that God is, as we can think Him to be, is blasphemy,’ exhibit this

recognition still more distinctly ; and it pervades all the cultivated theology of the present day. Thus while other constituents of religious creeds one by one drop away, this remains and grows even more manifest ; and so is shown to be the essential constituent."

" Are you beginning to get an idea of the difference between polytheism and monotheism, Dorothy ? " I asked.

" Yes. I see that while I have always thought myself a Christian, I was in fact a polytheist."

" So it would seem," I replied. " Let us see what comes next. We are to look again at the *Guide of the Perplexed*, pages 181, 171 and 172 ":

" No attribute coming under the head of quality in its widest sense, can be predicated of God. . . . God has no essential attribute in any form or in any sense whatever, and the rejection of corporeality implies the rejection of essential attributes. Those who believe that God is One, and that He has many attributes, declare the unity with their lips, and assume plurality in their thoughts."

" Next we are referred to pages 209, 207 and 208 of the same work. Here are the passages marked ":

" God's existence is absolute. It includes no composition. We comprehend only the fact that He exists, not His essence. Consequently it is a false assumption to hold that He has any positive attribute.

" The negative attributes of God are the true attributes : they do not include any incorrect notions or any deficiency whatever in reference to God, while positive attributes imply polytheism, and are inadequate, as we have already shown."

" Ezra tells us that, finally, Maimonides teaches the way of arriving at spiritual knowledge, and we are referred to page 193 of the *Guide of the Perplexed*. There we find " :

“The knowledge of the works of God is the knowledge of His attributes, by which He can be known.”

“The notes proceed with this remark by Ezra himself: ‘The wisest among all nations found God through the manifestation of God’s works. Here, for instance, is a hymn by the Greek Cleanthes, the Stoic, who lived 460 B.C.’” And I read:

“Hymn of Cleanthes, the Stoic: O thou who hast various names, but whose essence is one and infinite! O Jupiter! First of immortals, sovereign of nature, who governest all, who subjectest all to one law, I salute thee; for man is permitted to invoke thee. All that lives, all that moves, all that exists as mortal upon the earth, we all are born of thee, we are a feeble image of thee. I address to thee, therefore, my hymn, and will not cease to sing to thee. This universe suspended over our heads, and which seems to roll around the earth, obeys thee alone; it moves and is governed in silence by thy command. Genius of nature! In the heavens, on the earth, in the seas, nothing is made, nothing is produced without thee, except evil, which springs from the heart of the wicked. By happy accord thou so blindest that which is good with that which is not, that general and eternal harmony is everywhere established. Alone, of all beings, the wicked interrupt this grand harmony of the world.”

“Beautiful!” exclaimed Dorothy.

“Does it not remind you of Ezra’s definition of secular and sacred?” I asked. “You remember he called all labour and all objects sacred, and sin only he called secular?”

“I remember,” said Dorothy; “and it seems to me that he was in perfect accord with the writer of this hymn.”

I was about to proceed with the reading when Dorothy interrupted. “Joseph,” said she, “there is a

great deal to think about in all we have just read and talked over. I want some time to reflect on it. It will be better for both of us if we put off any further reading or discussion for a while, perhaps for a few weeks. Then we shall be ready for whatever else is to be considered. Meanwhile, we will think over the subjects that have been brought before our minds to-day."

To this proposal I agreed. The books and papers were put aside, and not until Monday, July 3d, did we resume the subject. On the afternoon of that day, at Dorothy's suggestion, we met in the study to continue our inquiry.





CHAPTER XLII

MORE AUTHORITIES

“LET me see,” I began, turning to Ezra’s notes :
“ we left off after reading the Hymn of Cleanthes ; and now Ezra submits some authority on prophecy. He desires us to consult pages 31 and 32 of the *Tractatus* of Spinoza, as the first citation on the subject. I will read the marked portion of those pages ” :

“ All natural knowledge may be entitled Prophecy ; for what we know by the light of nature depends entirely on a knowledge of God and his eternal decrees. But as this natural knowledge is accessible to all men, resting as it does on foundations that are common to mankind at large, therefore is it not so highly esteemed of the vulgar, whose disposition it is still to be attracted by rare and strange incidents, to the contempt of natural events. This is the reason why the vulgar, when there is question of Prophecy, always presume natural knowledge to be set aside, although it has a like title with any other kind of knowledge to be called divine, seeing that it is imparted to us by the nature of God and his decrees, and is not different from the knowledge which by all is called divine.”

“ According to this definition, then,” said Dorothy, “ the prophets were men whose divine power came to them through their knowledge of God, were they not ? ”

"On the contrary," I replied, "according to this writer, their knowledge of God came to them through their study of natural knowledge; and this, as Ezra told us, through their power of generalisation."

"If that is the case," Dorothy observed, "all who do the same can be prophets. At least, that is just what the writer would have us infer. I do not believe it, do you?"

"Let us see first what else there is said on the subject," I answered. "The notes tell us that further authority on prophecy will be found on pages 252 and 253 of James Freeman Clarke's *Ten Great Religions*. The passages marked are these":

"We all know that ideas come to us from within the mind, without any effort of ours. The poet, the artist, the inventor, when the course of his thoughts is checked by some obstacle, stops, waits, looks in, looks up, for an inspiration. Many of our best thoughts visit us in this way unexpectedly, and take us by surprise.

"If you read the biographies of great inventors, discoverers, poets, artists, you will often find it recorded that the germinal ideas of their whole life-work fell into their minds in this way. Thus we may say that not only Isaiah and Paul were inspired to teach religious truths, but that Newton was inspired to discover the law of gravitation, Phidias to carve the Olympian Jupiter, Columbus to discover America, Champollion to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics, Milton to write the *Paradise Lost*, and Mrs. Stowe to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*."

"That is plain enough," observed Dorothy; "but surely it does not refer to divine inspiration, does it?"

"It does certainly; for this writer speaks here not only of ordinary inspiration, — that of inventors, poets or discoverers, — but likewise of the inspiration of Paul and Isaiah; he is, therefore, of the same opinion as Spinoza. But here is a further reference to this

subject, a citation from the *Tractatus*, page 163. I will read it ”:

“The prophets and apostles, however, were wont to preach not to the faithful alone, but to infidels and impious persons also, who were nevertheless apt enough to understand the meaning of the words addressed to them: had it been otherwise, the prophets and apostles would have reserved their teaching for infants and children, and not have addressed grown men endowed with reason; in vain would Moses have prescribed his laws, could they only have been understood by the faithful, who in fact require no law. They who have recourse to supernatural light for understanding the discourses of the prophets and apostles, plainly show themselves to be without natural human light; and I am therefore very far from conceding to such the possession of any supernatural and divine gift.”

“If what is here said is true,” said Dorothy, “it must follow that prophecy is as possible in our day, and in this country, as it was in ancient times in Judea.”

“Much more so,” I replied.

“Then why do not the prophets prophesy?”

“They do, in many thousands of ways.”

“You are joking, are you not?”

“No,” I replied. “I was never more serious; the writer of an editorial may be as great a prophet on any important national topic now as the ancient Hebrew, who prophesied on political matters, was in his day.”

“Is that the case when the editorial is ‘inspired,’ as the papers call it?”

“No, you little goose! When an editorial is what is called ‘inspired,’ it is anything but a prophecy as you understand it. It is then an argument for pay,—for dollars and cents.”

"Well, then," said Dorothy, "if what you have read is true, then the number of prophets would be likely to increase in the ratio of the increase of general knowledge."

"Yes."

"Of what benefit would such an increase be?"

"Of very great benefit. It would, first of all, bring the people nearer to God; second, it would bring with it a much higher state of civilisation; and third, it would largely improve the material condition of all the people."

"Do you think," she asked, "that such results can be brought about by this new idea advocated by Ezra?"

"I think so," I replied; "but you are wrong in calling it a new idea, and in attributing it to Ezra. It is a very old idea, and has been taught by some of the wisest teachers in the world."

"Then why was it not generally accepted?"

"Before you or I may pronounce a verdict on this matter, we should first acquaint ourselves with the law which governs progress. As it appears to me, the product which we call civilisation is the result of the operation of two forces, one of which is the major and the other the minor. The major is the stationary or conservative force, and the minor is the impelling or progressive force.

"Whenever the impelling force is permitted to act too rapidly, it causes disturbance; whenever it acts too feebly, there is stagnation. Were there a determining court, possessed of necessary wisdom and enforcing power, to decide on the value of each proposition of the impelling force, the process of promulgation would be reduced to an appeal to this court. As no such court is in existence, the appeal is made direct to the stationary

force. Now before this stationary force can accept any new and conflicting opinion in the place of the one it holds, it must, as Ezra says, first reject the one it holds. Before it can do this logically, it must first adjust all other differing opinions which bear an intrinsic relation to it.

“ Now there are three main causes operating against the reception of such new opinions as conflict with those we hold. The first obstacle is misinterpretation or misunderstanding ; the second is opposition to self-interest ; and the third is non-utility. Where, as in the case of a new, useful and valuable invention, the object can be seen and understood, where acceptance of it is not against self-interest, and where its utility is evident, there is no opposition to its acceptance. But in the case of a new idea in belief, which involves the probability of misinterpretation and misunderstanding, and which largely conflicts with the self-interest of a powerful faction, there can be no acceptance without a prolonged and hotly contested conflict.

“ Judge then the state of the siege when the contest is between a dozen or so of the promulgating party and the rest of the world opposed to it.”

“ Yet,” said Dorothy, “ this was just the case with Christianity at the time of its birth ; its dozen apostles set themselves up against a whole world, and have they not gained the day ? ”

“ But have you forgotten,” I replied, “ that, in the struggle, these heroic souls were not only traduced and vilified, but even tortured and killed ? ”

“ Yes,” she answered, “ I begin to realise the great difficulties in the way.”

I again took up Ezra's notes. “ Here is the next

citation," I said : "*Comte and Positivism*, by John Stuart Mill, page 23. I will read the marked passage":

"The highest form of Monotheism, Christianity, has persisted to the present time in giving partial satisfaction to the mental dispositions that lead to Polytheism, by admitting into its theology the thoroughly polytheistic conception of a devil."

"Can that be denied?" asked Dorothy.

"I think not," I replied. "Ezra refers, further, on this subject, to some remarks by John Fiske, in his *Through Nature to God*. Mr. Fiske says":

"In getting rid of the Devil and regarding the universe as the multiform manifestation of a single all-pervading Deity, we become for the first time pure and uncompromising monotheists."

"I am in full accord with that statement," said Dorothy, "for it seems an absurdity to call ourselves monotheists so long as we believe in an eternal devil."

"I agree with you," I said. "And here is more from the same volume":

"We have at length reached a stage where it is becoming daily more and more apparent that with the deeper study of Nature the old strife between faith and knowledge is drawing to a close; and, disentangled at last from that ancient slough of despond the Human Mind will breathe a freer air and enjoy a vastly extended horizon.

"The story of Nature, no longer scattered in truant leaves, is bound with divine love in a mystic volume. We should find therein no traces of hazard or incongruity."

"This belief would remove all cause of scepticism, would it not?" asked Dorothy.

"To a very great degree, yes; and of atheism and pessimism too. Such a belief, if generally accepted, would serve more than any other system whatever to harmonise the people of the whole world."

I turned again to Ezra's notes. The next citation was the Koran, chapter 45, under the title "Kneeling":

"Verily both in heaven and earth are signs of the divine power unto the true believers: and in the creation of yourselves, and of the beasts which are scattered over the face of the earth, are signs unto people of sound judgment; and also in the vicissitude of night and day, and the rain which God sendeth down from heaven, whereby he quickeneth the earth after it hath been dead: in the change of the winds also are signs, unto people of understanding. These are the signs of God; we rehearse them unto thee with truth."

"So Mohammed had the same idea," remarked Dorothy.

"Yes, evidently," I replied.

Again, referring to Ezra's notes, I read, "Please turn to page 241, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, by Cardinal Newman." The quotation was as follows:

"If I looked into a mirror, and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me when I look into this living busy world, and see no reflection of its Creator."

"That seems also to be in harmony with Ezra's theme," said Dorothy.

"It does indeed."

Continuing, I read:

"Linnæus once said of the unfolding of a blossom: 'I saw God in His glory passing near me, and bowed my head in worship.'"

"Beautifully expressed!" exclaimed Dorothy.

"Yes; and if it may be said of a blossom, it may be said of all the works of God."

Our next reference was to several pages in Channing's works, the first on page 42:

"Matter was made for spirit, body for mind. The mind, the spirit, is the end of this living organisation of flesh and bones, of nerves and muscles ; and the end of this vast system of sea and land, and air and skies. This unbounded creation of sun, and moon, and stars, and clouds, and seasons, was not ordained merely to feed and clothe the body, but first and supremely to awaken, nourish, and expand the soul, to be the school of the intellect, the nurse of thought and imagination, the field for the active powers, a revelation of the Creator, and a bond of social union."

"Why, that seems quite the same idea advocated by Ezra," Dorothy observed.

I assented, and continued, from page 44 :

"Such a universe demands thought to be understood ; and we are placed in it to think, to put forth the power within, to look beneath the surface of things, to look beyond particular facts and events to their causes and effects, to their reasons and ends, their mutual influences, their diversities and resemblances, their proportions and harmonies, and the general laws which bind them together.

"By such thought the mind rises to a dignity which humbly represents the greatness of the Divine intellect ; that is, it rises more and more to consistency of views, to broad general principles, to universal truths, to glimpses of the order and harmony and infinity of the Divine system, and thus to a deep, enlightened veneration of the Infinite Father.

"Do not be startled, as if I were holding out an elevation of mind utterly to be despaired of ; for all thinking, which aims honestly and earnestly to see things as they are, to see them in their connections, and to bring the loose, conflicting ideas of the mind into consistency and harmony, all such thinking, no matter in what sphere, is an approach to the dignity of which I speak."

"This is even nearer to Ezra's doctrine than was the other quotation," said Dorothy.

"Yes," I replied, "there seems to be an identity of idea."

I resumed, at page 45 :

"Truth is the light of the Infinite Mind, and the image of God in his creatures. Nothing endures but truth. The dreams, fictions, theories, which men would substitute for it, soon die."

"How wonderfully like what Ezra teaches!" Dorothy remarked. "I wonder if there is any originality in his ideas?"

"In the general statement of them, no," I replied; "but in the manner of presentation, yes."

"I fail to understand."

"I will try to make myself clear. You and I have perhaps read sentences, paragraphs and books replete with ideas like those I have just read, but they then failed to create the impression upon us that they now do. The reason is apparent; Ezra has materialised these ideas by placing them in a concrete form. This he does by eliminating all inconsistent and conflicting ideas; and thus he reaches, as a culmination and conclusion of the whole reasoning, one essential idea, which he denominates the 'Central Theme.' In this method consists his title to originality, and not in the matter itself."

"Yes, I see now; but do you think he can ever bring the idea to a realisation?"

"That seems hardly probable," I replied; "for in the first place he may never attempt any wider range of propaganda than the circle of his own club. If, however, the matter were set forth in some suitable book, it would probably reach many who would perhaps be more able to promote the materialisation of the idea than seems possible at this time. As a rule, it is seldom

that the actual promulgating is done by the originator of an idea ; it is generally done by converts.

“ Never in the history of the world has there been a more opportune time for the promulgation and spread of this idea than in our day. I am almost sure of one thing, however, and it is this : even if this proposition goes no farther than the club members, and even if they continue to reject it, and even if all traces of the effort are lost in oblivion, — even then, it is certain in some form to predominate ultimately.

“ The progress of the world, if nothing else, is bound to evolve it, as it evolves everywhere, and at all times, from the lower to the higher. Consider now ; what higher step in general amelioration and in the unification of idea, opinion and tendency can we suggest than this ? What other form or mode of belief is more capable of unifying and elevating the human race ? ”

“ But,” said Dorothy, “ will not the acceptance of this idea destroy Christianity ? ”

“ That depends upon what we mean by Christianity. If we mean polytheistic Christianity, or idolatrous Christianity, then such Christianity would beyond a doubt be destroyed by the acceptance of this idea. But as to monotheistic Christianity, acceptance of this idea would unquestionably strengthen and purify it. Christianity in this form would then be able to do what it has so long aimed to do and could not do. It would, in this form, and in a short space of time, spread, and become the only religion in the world.”

“ But with the various tastes and inclinations of the people of the world, how would it ever be possible for all the people to limit themselves to one set form, or to a single ritual ? ”

“ That is not at all necessary,” I replied. “ The

new idea can permit of as great a variety of forms and rituals as do the systems which now exist ; and even more. And the ' Central Theme ' can nevertheless be preserved in all its purity."

I turned again to Channing, and read, as indicated, from page 53 :

"It is sometimes said, that the multitude may think on the common business of life, but not on higher subjects, and especially on religion. This, it is said, must be received on authority ; on this, men in general can form no judgment of their own. But this is the last subject on which the individual should be willing to surrender himself to others' dictation.

"In nothing has he so strong an interest. In nothing is it so important that his mind and heart should be alive and engaged. In nothing has he readier means of judging for himself. In nothing, as history shows, is he more likely to be led astray by such as assume the office of thinking for him.

"Religion is a subject open to all minds. Its great truths have their foundation in the soul itself, and their proofs surround us on all sides. God has not shut up the evidence of His being in a few books, written in a foreign language, and locked up in the libraries of colleges and philosophers ; but has written His name on the heavens and on the earth, and even on the minutest animal and plant.

"Let me not be told that the multitude do actually receive religion on authority, or on the word of others. I reply, that a faith so received seems to me of little worth. The precious, the living, the effectual part of a poor man's faith is that of which he sees the reasonableness and excellence ; that which approves itself to his intelligence, his conscience, his heart. That which answers to deep wants in his own soul, and of which he has the witness in his own inward and outward experience.

"All other parts of his belief, those which he takes on blind trust, and in which he sees no marks of truth and divinity, do him little or no good. Too often they do him harm, by perplexing his simple reason, by substituting the fictions and

artificial systems of theologians for the plain precepts of love, and justice, and humility, and filial trust in God."

"I agree with that," said Dorothy.

I expressed my own assent, and continued, from page 54 :

"As long as it was supposed that religion is to benefit the world by laying restraints, awakening fears, and acting as a part of the system of police, so long it was natural to rely on authority and tradition as the means of its propagation ; so long it was desirable to stifle thought and inquiry on the subject. But now that we have learned that the true office of religion is to awaken pure and lofty sentiments, and to unite man to God by rational homage and enlightened love, there is something monstrous in placing religion beyond the thought and the study of the mass of the human race."

"I agree to that too," Dorothy remarked.

I continued from page 938 :

"Wisdom is omnipresent. Everywhere it comes to meet us. It shines in the sun. It irradiates the heavens. It whispers through all sounds of Nature. It beams resplendent from the characters of good and wise men, and more brightly still in our own souls. Our teachers are thus all around and within, above and beneath. Divine wisdom is not shut up within any book."

"How beautiful !" exclaimed Dorothy.

"And how true !" I added. "Listen to this." And I read, from page 941 :

"And this universe is the sign and symbol of infinite power, intelligence, purity, bliss, and love. It is a pledge from the Living God of boundless and endless communications of happiness, truth, and virtue. Thus are we always in contact, if I may so say, with the infinite, as comprehended, penetrated, and quickened by it. What unutterable import is there in the teaching of such a revelation ! What a name is written all through it in characters of celestial light ! A spiritual voice

pervades it, more solemn, sublime, and thrilling than if the roar of oceans, thunders, whirlwinds, and conflagrations were concentrated in one burst of praise. This voice is all the more eloquent because it is spiritual ; because it is the voice in which the All-Wise speaks to all intelligences."

" Sublime ! " exclaimed Dorothy.

" Yes ; as sublime, as exalted and as grand as similar expressions of the prophets of old."

" Do you then class Channing as a prophet ? " she asked.

" Why not ? Would his exalted theme, so expressed, find less favour with God than that of the prophets who lived before him ? "

" I do not think it would," she replied.

I resumed the volume, and, turning to page 940, read :

" What a blessing would it be to us, one and all, could we but really wake up to the glory of this Creation, in which we live ! Most men are actually asleep for their lifetime in this vast and magnificent world. Mighty changes are going on around them, fitted to entrance their souls in wonder and thankfulness ; and yet they are moved no more than if they were shut up in a mill, seeing only the perpetual revolution of spindles, and hearing only the monotonous hum and clatter of machinery. We might have been born amidst such machinery, had the Creator so pleased. And men's insensibility often seems to deserve no better lot. But instead of being pent up within narrow walls, we live amidst this immeasurable universe. Instead of a few pale lamps, giving only necessary rays, oceans of light daily overflow this planet whereon we dwell, with inexhaustible splendour and beauty. And the fire that sustains the life of earth's creatures is forever freshly kindled millions of miles away."

" This is the mighty spirit," said Dorothy, " who should have built up the proposed Universal Church.

How much greater and grander is the idea when clothed in the sublime imagery of this man's creation than in the humbler garb supplied by Ezra ! ”

“ So it would seem to us,” I replied ; “ but the ways of God are not our ways. He more frequently selects the humble and the lowly to do His will ; and who shall say Him nay ? Who shall say to Him, ‘ What doest Thou ? ’ Ezra himself realises this, for he refers us to a remark of the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, quoted on page 600 of Samuel Johnson’s *Oriental Religions*. It reads : ‘ Be not ashamed to learn of inferiors.’ ”

“ The very thing we were speaking of,” remarked Dorothy. “ Ezra seems to have anticipated our thoughts.”

“ And here is another maxim of Confucius, quoted on page 603 : ‘ The superior man is catholic, not partisan.’ ”

“ That is true,” Dorothy observed.

“ Yes, a great truth, concisely expressed. The idea we are considering is surely catholic, do you not think so ? ”

“ Yes, most surely.”

“ We are referred also,” I continued, “ to the words of Mencius, another Chinese philosopher, who lived 371 years B.C., quoted on page 648 ” :

“ When Heaven is about to confer a great function, it first exercises the mind with suffering and the limbs with toil ; exposes the body to privations, and confounds the undertakings. In this way it stimulates power and supplies defect. Incessant falls teach men to reform, and distresses rouse their strength.”



CHAPTER XLIII

FAITH STRENGTHENED

“ **E**ZRA must have meant that for you, Dorothy,” said I, as I put the book down. “ Now, tell me, are you still suffering because of loss of your faith ? ”

“ No, for I have not lost my faith ; the evidences shown us by Ezra have strengthened it. I am as strong a believer in Christianity as I ever was, — and stronger,” she replied, with emphasis.

“ But has all this experience had no effect on you ; has it made no impression ? ”

“ It has had a decided effect, and has made a lasting impression. It has transformed me, from now on and for all time, from a polytheistic Christian into a monotheistic Christian ; and I thank God for the transformation.”

I took my wife’s hand. “ My dear Dorothy,” I said, “ you are saved by this experience many years of sorrowful struggle. We should ever be thankful for the means that brought light to illumine our souls.”

“ But how ungrateful we are ! ” exclaimed Dorothy.

“ In what way ? ” I asked.

“ Have we not benefited through Ezra’s great labour ? We are told that he is dangerously ill ; that his sister is in constant attendance at his side ; yet neither of us

has had the goodness of heart to inquire as to his condition, or even to thank him for the books he sent. Nor have we returned his books ; and, as he is a poor man and a student, he may miss them."

" You are right," I replied ; " and the fault is mine, for the books were sent to me."

" But I was guilty of a breach of courtesy," objected Dorothy, " in not writing to Miss Selner concerning her charity report. We are both to blame. The question now remains, what amends can we make ? "

" We can write to them."

" No, I would telegraph," said Dorothy. Then, after a moment's thought, she added, " I wish we might ask them up here to visit us."

" Well, then, ask them."

" But how can they afford the expense of the journey ? "

" We will send them tickets."

" I hardly think they will accept," observed Dorothy, reflectively. " We must think of some plan that will obviate the necessity of such an offer. I have it ! We will arrange the charity work for next season. I will write Miss Selner, asking her and her brother to come up and settle the arrangements with us here. In that way we may quite properly provide the expenses of their journey. Shall I do so ? "

" Yes, by all means," I replied.

Accordingly the letter of invitation was written and despatched. A reply from Miss Selner reached us by return post. In it she informed us her brother's health was much better, and he was again at work, but that he was unable to leave without jeopardising his situation. She herself, however, would come, and expected to arrive on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, therefore, my wife and I drove to Castine to meet the boat. Our visitor was among the passengers, and the greetings were cordial on both sides, though I observed on Miss Selner's face an expression which I attributed to fatigue or anxiety. I helped her into the carriage.

"I hope," said Dorothy, "that we shall have the pleasure of entertaining you for several weeks."

"I thank you," replied Miss Selner, "and I should be delighted to remain; but duty calls me home with the least possible delay, and as soon as may be after we dispose of the affair which was the cause of my coming."

"I am really disappointed," Dorothy answered. "I counted on the pleasure of having you with us for several weeks at least, and for the season if possible. We are very sorry, also, not to have the pleasure of a visit from your brother; and your return so soon will be a double disappointment. Can you not stay?"

"While I am grateful for your kindness," Miss Selner replied, "I am compelled to go back without delay. There are certain household duties that must be performed; besides, I am anxious to return in order to be of assistance to my brother."

"I thought he had regained his health," observed my wife.

"Yes, but not entirely. When his employer learned that he was no longer confined to his bed, he sent for him, saying he was needed to help out with the fall orders; and so Ezra went to work. As he is studious, and spends much of his time in-doors, I have always taken it upon myself to direct him in matters that concern his health, for in those particulars he is quite

negligent. So you see I cannot prolong my stay, however much I should enjoy it."

Miss Selner remained for two days in almost constant consultation with my wife. On the morning of the third day we accompanied her to the boat wharf, and there bade her good-bye.

"Did you notice the look of sadness on Eva's face?" asked Dorothy, as, in the afternoon of that day, she and I were seated in the study.

"Yes, I did. I suppose it is due to her anxiety about her brother, and perhaps to the fatigue of her attendance on him."

"Not that alone. There is another reason, and I have found it out."

"What is it?"

"Well, I discovered that she had formed an attachment for Mr. Fisher, the man on the Charity Committee."

"Does he love her in return?" I asked.

"Yes, very much."

"Then why do they not marry?"

"He has proposed it," replied Dorothy, "but Ezra is opposed."

"Why?"

"Because of the difference in religion."

"That is strange," I said. "I should think the liberality and the breadth of Ezra's ideas would lead him to set aside the ordinary narrow prejudices of his people in a matter like this."

"They do not seem to," replied Dorothy.

"Has Miss Selner refused Mr. Fisher's proposal," I asked, "or is the question still undecided?"

"She has rejected him."

"Has she given him any reason?"

"No," said Dorothy, "and I think it is very sad. The lot of the poor," she continued, after a moment's pause, "is indeed hard."

"No harder than that of the rich, in matters of this kind, is it?" I replied. "Rich men and women are subject to the same trials and sufferings of the heart as are the poor."

"I did not altogether refer to the question of marriage or refusals of marriage," Dorothy observed; "I meant the privations and sufferings of poverty. I can fancy how hard it would be for me to be compelled to live in the house and among the surroundings in which Eva lives."

"I noticed," I said, "when at their house, that they occupy four rooms. That is above the average for mechanics or working people, many of whom are obliged to content themselves with three, sometimes with two, and sometimes with only one room for a family."

"Horrible even to think of it!" exclaimed Dorothy. "Are these privations, this abject poverty and this suffering and misery results of the operation of natural law?"

"I do not think so. Social arrangements, social systems, are largely the outgrowth of artificial convention. Take it in the question of wages, for instance. I will read you what John Stuart Mill, in his *Comte and Positivism*, says, on page 149":

"The rough method of settling the labourer's share of the produce, the competition of the market, may represent a practical necessity, but certainly not a moral ideal. Its defence is, that civilisation has not hitherto been equal to organising anything better than this first rude approach to an equitable distribution."

"But is there any absolute necessity for following this 'rough method'? Is the world so crowded, are the natural resources so scant, is the earth so barren?"

"My dear Dorothy," I said, "were you to speak in any assembly of the rich and the influential as you now speak, you would be cried down as a socialist, or even looked upon as a crank or a lunatic."

"What heartless beasts such people must be!" she exclaimed. "And yet they are supposed to have been made in the image of God."

"Such is the world, my dear," I replied, "and such it will be for a long time to come."

"Until when? Shall there never be an end to this state of misery?"

"Yes, there will be an end; but not before many millions realise this condition. When these millions rightly conclude that these evils need not exist, and when they resolve that the evils shall not exist, then shall the evils cease."

"When may we expect the people to come to these conclusions?"

"When they have been educated up to it," I answered. "Listen to what John Stuart Mill says in this same book":

"Whoever thinks that the wretched education which mankind as yet receive, calls forth their mental powers (except those of a select few) in a sufficient or even tolerable degree, must be very easily satisfied.

"The abuse of intellectual power is only to be dreaded, when society is divided between a few highly cultivated intellects and an ignorant and stupid multitude."

"Would not the proposed Church Universal be a good educator?" asked Dorothy.

"It would be more potent, and would educate toward

a higher humanity, than any educator the world has ever had."

"Then why should not we, you and I, work for its upbuilding?"

"I lack the courage," I replied. "God has denied me that exalted power which is the attribute of the prophet or the promulgator. I should shrink from the task. I should tremble, were men to call me crank. And in undertaking the promulgation of such a work I should be called not only crank, but renegade, apostate, atheist, materialist, epicurean, sophist and infidel. In case the results of the work indicated progress, I should no doubt be called fool and knave."

"Was not Ingersoll called by these names?"

"In some instances he was; but in reality there was no fear of Ingersoll. The predominant churches realise that they have very little to fear from atheism. Atheism answers no questions, it solves nothing. The manifestations of God are here, and they speak of God to the soul properly attuned. The atheist is such simply because he has been denied spiritual life. Having ears, he hears not, having eyes, he sees not; and he marvels that others hear and see.

"No, the predominant churches have no fear of atheism or of atheists. What they fear is a contesting church which, in open competition, gains converts from them. That is what they fear, and that is what they fight, and what they will continue to fight until the time shall have come when the Church is for all the people, by all the people and of all the people. At that time church contention shall be at an end."

"But if this process is to take centuries," observed Dorothy, "cannot something be done now and at once to ameliorate the condition of the people?"

“No, nothing. Socialists and others boast that amelioration may be brought about through the coercive application of physical force, but all the force they can exert would only enslave the masses much more than they are enslaved to-day. The world never has been, and never can be, elevated by force or by transforming it into a Utopia. The world has been elevated, and can be elevated still higher, through education, and only through education.

“The Church should be the great, omnipresent, omnipotent educator. It should guide the home, the school, the field, the shop, all places, all the people, all the time. It should teach all how to see, how to hear, how to think and how to act. And this should be accomplished in harmony with the Law Universal, and in perfect accord with the design and the will of God. This is the first and only reform for which the people will have to struggle. This once achieved, all the other reforms must follow, and without any struggle at all. All these results, I am inclined to believe, can be brought about through the proposed Church Universal.”

“Would that God might incline the people’s hearts to that church,” said Dorothy, inclining her head reverently.





CHAPTER XLIV

TIME AND FURTHER THOUGHT

THE mail of the following morning brought letters from my uncle and aunt, written on the eve of their departure for England. They had come to a sudden determination to spend the remainder of their summer vacation in Scotland, and our communications were for the present to be addressed to them at Edinburgh. If, at the conclusion of the season, my uncle's business should not demand his presence in America, it was their intention to proceed to the continent, and to pass the winter in Italy. The following summer they hoped to attend the Paris Exposition; and they expressed an earnest wish that Dorothy and I might come over and join them, as early in the fall as possible.

"Shall we go, Dorothy?" I asked.

"If you wish to," she replied.

"Well, we will think it over," I said. "We have plenty of time to decide."

Early in September we left Castine, made a few short visits to places of interest in northern Maine, proceeded to Canada, and returned from there to New York, in which city we arrived on Saturday, September 16th. We went at once to my uncle's house, which was ready

to receive us. There we found an accumulation of mail which had come too late to be forwarded.

Among our letters was one from Ezra. In it he said :

“You may remember that on adjournment of the last meeting it was resolved to hold the first fall meeting of the club on September 20th. We are undecided where to meet, whether at our rooms or in your lawyer’s office. If Mrs. Morton will be able to attend, we will choose the latter, provided it is available.”

Dorothy, on reading the letter, expressed herself as anxious to attend the meeting. I therefore communicated with my lawyer, ascertained that his office would be at my disposal, and so notified Ezra.

On Wednesday evening my wife and I proceeded to the place of meeting, where we exchanged cordial greetings with the members of the club. Ezra, accompanied by his sister, was the last to arrive. He showed clearly the effects of his recent illness, and his pallor and emaciation indicated that his attendance on this evening was an act of imprudence.

Report of a meeting of the Twentieth Century Club, New York, Wednesday, Sept. 20, 1899, 7.45 P.M.

Ezra arose and said : “The meeting will now come to order. The secretary will please read the minutes of the last meeting.”

As part of the minutes, the secretary read the resolution passed at the previous meeting, which was as follows : “Resolved : That we defer final action on the proposition of the president until the next regular meeting.”

Ezra.—Gentlemen, you have heard the resolution. The subject, “What is Our Central Theme, and What Should It Be?” is now before you. What is your pleasure?

Quail.—I suggest that the entire subject-matter be again opened for consideration and debate, and that any final action be deferred until the conclusion of said consideration and debate. I offer this suggestion because I have now some opinions which I did not have during our previous meetings. Furthermore, I am anxious to learn whether any of the other members have likewise modified their views on the subject.

Moore.—I think the suggestion of Mr. Quail is a good one, and I heartily favour it.

Bradley.—I, too, am in favour of it.

Fisher.—I move that we defer final action in accordance with this suggestion, and that we now take up the consideration of the question under the usual rules of the association. If there be no objection, I ask that Mr. Moore be censor for the evening and that Mr. Bradley be the first speaker.

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Ezra.—Gentlemen, the subject is now before us under the rules of the association. Mr. Moore is censor, and Mr. Bradley the first speaker.

Bradley.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: They say that an honest confession is good for the soul. I have a confession to make to this association; one which is important to me, and no doubt will be interesting to every person here present. Briefly, then, I have been converted to the president's idea, and were the matter up for a vote now, I should vote, "Yes."

That this conversion is real and lasting you will undoubtedly perceive as soon as you learn how it came about.

During the first few weeks after our last meeting the idea of the proposed Church Universal came to my mind from time to time, but at first so feebly that it was

quickly dismissed without effort. To my surprise, however, it returned more strongly than before. By recalling all the arguments against it, both those I had heard and those I had myself offered, I again succeeded in ridding my mind of it. A few weeks later, however, I was the more surprised to find myself again strongly drifting toward the subject. Try as I would, I could not drive the theme away. Stronger and stronger became the idea that took possession of me that, in rejecting this proposal, I was perhaps rejecting the highest and surest possible means of human amelioration, salvation and happiness. Again and again I tried hard to reason this conviction out of my mind, but I was utterly unable to do so. Once I was prompted to accept it; but here again I was met with another difficulty, in the form of the arguments I had heard and had myself used against it; and these arguments constituted a barrier, solid as a wall of granite, against the reception of the new idea. But when I tried to break down this barrier, again I failed utterly; so that my repeated failures greatly disturbed my peace of mind.

Now it is proper to narrate the incident which finally transformed me into a full and complete believer in this proposed Church Universal. I am, as some of you know, a married man. I have a boy of twelve, Walter, and a girl of ten, Alice. Walter has an inquisitive and logical mind, and plies his questions in rapid succession. Alice is thoughtful and reticent. On Sunday morning, about six weeks ago, Walter suddenly asked me whether Adam and Eve were ever in the United States. I replied that the Bible told us Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden, in Asia.

"Were the Indians Adam and Eve's children?" he asked. I told him that the Bible taught that all human

beings came from Adam and Eve. "Did Jesus suffer in the United States," he continued, "to show the Indians that He died for them?" "The Bible does not say so," I answered. "Then, in that case," observed Walter, "the Indians must have been created to suffer punishment forever." "No," I said, "for Columbus brought Christian teachers with him when he came." "But Columbus only came here in 1492," objected Walter. "Where did all the Indians go to that died between the year one and 1492?"

This question I was not immediately compelled to reply to, for my wife, observing my embarrassment, sent Walter out on an errand. But the expedient was without avail, for Alice came up and wanted to know the answer. I told her that it was a hard question, and I would look it up.

In the evening, Walter began again to ply me with questions on the Bible, many of which I did not care to answer just as they are answered at our meetings. Suddenly an idea came to me, and I said to both children: "To-morrow there will be something in this room that will answer questions; look around sharply, and tell me to-morrow night if it is not so."

The next morning I placed on a small table in a corner of the room a plant, a glass bottle of water and a clod of earth.

On my return from work that evening, I was met by the question from Walter: "Papa, you told us last night there would be something in this room to-day that would answer questions. We have looked everywhere, but cannot find it. Where is it?" I glanced at the table, and saw that it was bare. "Look again to-morrow," I said.

After the children had gone to bed, I asked my wife

whether she had noticed some things I had put on the table. She replied that Alice had found some earth there, and had thrown it into the yard.

"Did you see anything else?" I asked.

"No," she answered; then, correcting herself, she added, "Yes, I did find a plant, and I took it off and put it on the window-sill."

"Anything else?" I asked.

"Yes," she said; "Walter brought me a bottle that held something he thought was medicine, and I put it on the shelf. There it is."

I told my wife that I had put these objects on the table for a purpose; that I was going to replace them there, and that I wished she would see that they remained there, and would watch the results with me. Her curiosity was aroused and she asked my purpose. I replied that I was making an experiment, and that she would find it more interesting to watch its effect on the children than to be told my object. She readily assented, and early in the morning the three objects were again placed on the small table.

On returning from work that night, I saw that the objects were still in place. Almost as I entered I was met by Walter, who said: "Papa, Alice and I have looked all around the room, but we could not see anything that answered questions. Where is it?"

I opened the Bible and bade Walter read the passage I pointed out: "They have mouths, but they speak not, eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not, noses have they, but they smell not."

"That is said of idols, is n't it?" asked Alice.

"Yes," I replied, "and it may also be said of idolaters."

"Then," said Walter, "if there is something in this

room that answers questions, and if we do not speak to it, or see it, or hear it, or smell it, are we idolaters?"

"We shall see by and by," I answered.

"I thought, Papa," said Alice, "that the little table over there perhaps had on it the things that answer questions; but all I can see is the plant; and plants cannot answer questions, can they?"

"We shall find that out, too," I replied.

As we were all seated at supper, Walter asked to be excused, rose and went over to the small table, where he stood for some time, gazing intently at the objects. Finally he came over to me.

"Papa, what is in the bottle?" "Water," I replied.

He went back and again stood gazing at the objects on the small table. As we rose from supper he came to me and said: "Papa, I think I know now."

"What is it, my son?"

"I think you mean that plants need water and earth, don't you?"

"Well," I said, "you and Alice can find that out for yourselves; to-morrow if you can; if not, don't give up trying all the days of your lives. You may tell me to-morrow night what questions have been answered."

The next evening Walter met me at the door, and exclaimed, "Papa, I have found out: God made earth and water in order to give us plants. Is n't that so?"

"Up to now, children," I said, "you have asked the questions, and I have answered them; but in this case I will ask the questions and see how you answer. Now, Alice, what have these things told you?"

"They tell me," she replied, "that God makes pretty leaves and sweet-smelling flowers from earth and water."

“ Well,” said I, “ we will see what they tell you to-morrow.”

On Wednesday evening Walter said he had been answered another question : “ God must be very wise to make plants grow from earth and water.”

“ And what questions of yours have been answered, Alice ? ”

“ I have been answered that God loves to make beautiful leaves and flowers.”

“ You are both being answered at last,” I remarked. “ Try again, and keep on trying, and in time you will receive many and wonderful answers ; answers that will bring you nearer to God, and will cause you to understand Him much better and much more clearly than you now understand Him.”

On Thursday evening both children met me, eager to impart their discoveries. Alice said : “ Oh, Papa, the question answered to-day was that God must be beautiful ; for the leaves He makes on the plants are so beautiful, and so are the flowers, that we copy them on the wall-paper and on the matting, on the oil-cloth, on the bowl of the lamp, on the window-shades, and on calico and on embroidery.”

Walter said : “ I was answered this. I used to know that water was clear and clean and good to drink, and I used to think that earth was just dirt and nothing more ; but now I see that earth is very wonderful, and that it can do more wonderful things than a sleight-of-hand man. I now see that God is very wise.”

This experiment clearly indicated to me several things : first, that the lack of knowledge of God’s laws by the children showed that there had been some fundamental error in the system of religious training ; second, that the new system, which I had tried, seemed far more

potent as a means of religious education than the old ; third, that under the new system my children would be likely to develop into much higher types of man and woman than under the old ; fourth, that the same could be said of the religious training of all other children.

Feeling secure in this conclusion, I placed before my wife the whole matter of the contention engaging our attention. After some consideration, she advised that we give the new system a further trial. I therefore spoke to the children, and told them to study as they had done, and to continue to ask questions and to find answers, and to report to me a week after the following Sunday.

In addition, I asked Walter to memorise the following verse of Psalm civ. : " O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all." Also to memorise the following verses of Psalm xix. : " The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth."

To Alice I said : " You told me that God loves to make beautiful leaves and flowers. Now I wish you to ask the leaves and flowers this question : Ask them to tell you what it is that makes them beautiful."

My wife, entering into the spirit of this new experiment, took pains to aid the children in their new tasks. She took them both on several occasions to Central Park, and on one occasion to the country. The children displayed considerable enthusiasm in this new method of religious training, and when the appointed

time for review came they were anxious to have me proceed.

Much as I should like to enter fully into the details of this review, I am constrained to shorten the recital considerably, as I am mindful that I should not consume too much of the time of this association. Both of the children had gathered together quite a collection of objects which they sorted out on the table. Among them were insects, leaves, grasses, flowers and pebbles.

Walter, on being questioned, said: "Papa, I see now that the verses you asked me to learn by heart are very good, because they help me to ask questions of the rocks, the pebbles, the insects and of many things. I find that they do not answer questions just as soon as you ask, but I have to ask the same questions many times, and some are not answered yet.

"I never knew before," he continued, "how wise and good God is. I know now by the answers of these insects and these pebbles and these leaves. But I can find no answer to the line. Will you please tell me that one answer?"

"What line?" I asked.

"You told me to study, 'Their line is gone out through all the earth,' and I cannot tell what it means. I thought at first it meant a telegraph-wire or a cable telegraph, but they did not have those in Bible times."

"No, my son," I replied, "it means the line of truth, and it is made plain and clear to us by God's laws."

"But, Papa," said Walter, "I cannot understand you; not as I can when I ask questions of the water, the earth, the plants and the things here before us, and when they give me the answer."

"I will try to make it clear," I said. So, taking up a glass, I partially filled it with water, and asked

Walter to get me a piece of ice from the ice-chest. This he did. Placing the piece of ice in the water, I said: "You see what proportion of this remains above, and what proportion remains below, the water-line?"

"Yes, I see," he replied.

"Well," said I, "if this tumbler were an ocean, and if the piece of ice were many hundred million times larger, the ice would preserve the same proportions above and below the water-line that it does in this glass. Do you see now?"

"Oh, yes," he gleefully replied. "I see now that the line of truth goes in every direction." After a moment's thoughtful hesitation he added: "Papa, may I ask you just a few more questions?"

"Yes."

"Does the law of truth," he asked, "God's law, ever change?" I replied by handing him the Bible, from which I asked him to read Psalm cxvii.: "O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth forever."

"Yes, I see," he continued, "but last Sunday at Sunday-school the teacher told us that the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, and that God pushed the river away on both sides, and that all the people walked over on dry land, and when they were over on the other side the water rushed back again. Do you believe that?" he asked, looking at me earnestly.

I hesitated a long time before giving a reply; in fact, so long that Walter, thinking I had forgotten to answer, asked the question again. I realised fully the effect which my reply would have on my children, on my wife and on myself. And of a sudden my mind was made up, and I said, "No, I do not believe it."

"Why did the Sunday-school teacher tell a story then?" asked Walter.

"Perhaps because he did not know better," I answered.

"But why should a Sunday-school teacher not know better, and why should he tell stories? Why should n't he teach us God's true laws as you teach them to us, through earth, water and plants?"

"Perhaps he will know better in time to come," I said.

"If that story is in the Bible," observed Walter, thoughtfully, "and if it is not true, does n't it spoil the whole Bible?"

I replied to him, giving as an explanation an almost literal recital of the statement made by our president on that subject at our several meetings. This seemed to satisfy the children.

I then asked Alice whether she had asked the leaves and flowers the question what it was that made them beautiful; and she replied:

"Yes, Papa, I did ask them, and they told me that they were beautiful because the flowers smelt sweet, and because the colours were so lovely and the leaves so regular."

"Why, Alice," I said, "I am astonished that you say the leaves are regular. Straight lines are regular, but leaves are not straight lines, are they?" She hesitated for some moments, and then replied, "I don't mean the kind of regular that straight lines make. That is not nearly so pretty as regular made with crooked lines, like the pattern on the calico in Mamma's dress, or what is painted on the bowl of the lamp."

I asked her to continue her explanation. "You can see by this leaf," she said, "that God makes this

side of the leaf a little wider than the other side on a straight line across ; but the other half of the leaf on the other side of the stem is just as wide a little higher up. I suppose God does this so as not to make the other half of the leaf jealous. Now when we tear off a piece of the leaf it is no longer beautiful, because it is crooked and not regular ; it is spoiled."

I was surprised and delighted to find that the interpretation of beauty in form, as made by Alice, bordered closely on that of harmony. It was, therefore, a comparatively easy task for me to elaborate on what she had said, and, from the theme of beauty in form, to deduce the beauty of noble thought and act. This I did, employing almost the exact words used by our worthy president when he spoke on the same subject.

After listening earnestly to what I had to say, Alice asked : " Does the Bible teach the same things that you are saying now ? "

" Yes," I replied, " for Saint Paul, in the Epistle to the Philippians, says : ' Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. ' "

" And, Papa," said Walter, " I like that place in the Bible where it says, ' They have mouths, but they speak not, eyes have they but they see not ; they have ears, but they hear not, noses have they, but they smell not. ' Does n't that mean that people who do not see God's works are idolaters ? "

" Instead of answering that question, I prefer to have you and Alice answer it. And in order to help you answer properly, I will ask you a few questions.

Tell me, Alice, is a Christian praying in a Christian church an idolater ? ”

“ No, for Christians are believers in God, and are not idolaters.”

“ What would you call a Chinaman praying before idols in a Chinese temple ? ”

“ I should call him an idolater, because people who worship idols are idolaters.”

“ That is true,” I remarked ; “ but let us continue. Supposing some Christian were to ask the Chinaman to stop going to the Chinese temple, and to stop praying to idols, and were to ask him, instead, to attend Christian service and to pray to God ; supposing, further, that this Chinaman came to the Christian church,— would he, then, any longer be an idolater ? ”

“ No,” replied Alice.

“ But, Papa,” observed Walter, “ I think Alice has made a mistake in that answer ; for a Christian could go to an idol church and not be an idolater, and a man who believes in idols could go to a Christian church and still believe in idols. Is that not so ? ”

“ Yes, you are right ; but let us still continue. Supposing that the Chinaman we are speaking of, on visiting a Christian church, were asked to give up believing in idols and were asked to believe in God. Let us further suppose that he were given a Bible ; could we not then say that he was no longer an idolater ? ”

“ Yes,” replied Alice, “ for idolaters do not believe in the Bible.”

“ I think Alice has made another mistake,” said Walter.

“ How ? ” I asked.

“ Because the Chinaman could have a Bible and not read it, or he could read it but not believe it.”

“ And what would that remind you of, Walter ? ”

“ It would be like the passage in the Bible that you told me to study: ‘ They have mouths, but they speak not, eyes have they but they see not ; they have ears, but they hear not. ’ ”





CHAPTER XLV

THE TWO TRAVELLERS

“**A**ND now, children,” I said, “pay attention to this story: A long time ago there lived a boy who was cruel, wicked and foolish. His father tried hard to make him better, but could not do so. One day, the father called the boy, and said : ‘ You are so cruel and wicked and foolish that I am ashamed of you ; if you do not stop being so bad you will be driven out of the city. The reason you are so bad is that you do not often go to church and you do not pray ; now hereafter I wish you to go to church and pray.’

“ So the boy went to church and prayed, and he knelt down before an altar on which was a great statue, and the statue was called a god ; and near the big statue were many small statues of gods. And when the boy looked about the church, and saw that the great and small statues were prettier than any other things in the city, he liked them, and he brought them presents, and knelt down in front of them and prayed to them.

“ But, strange to say, the boy did not become better at all ; in fact, he became even more cruel, more wicked and more foolish. So one day his father called him and said, ‘ I am very angry with you, and have a mind to

punish you severely for your wickedness. Tell me how it is that going to church and praying do not make you better.' 'I think,' said the boy, 'that you have no reason to punish me.' 'Why not?' asked the father angrily. 'How can I be better,' replied the boy, 'when you and the priests of the church and the policemen and the judges and all the people are just as cruel and wicked and foolish as I am?' 'But that is because you and I and the people do not go to church often enough,' said the father; 'nor do we pray hard enough, nor do we place as many presents on the altar as we should.'

"And so the boy went oftener to church, and prayed harder, and placed more presents on the altar; but all this only made him worse. And all the other people of the city became worse; and they began fighting, one with the other, and when the boy saw this, he ran away from home, and left the city and came to another city. And when he had come there, he was told why he had been so bad. He was told that it was because he believed in false gods; and that if he would no longer believe in them, but would go to the church in the city to which he had now come, he would no longer be bad. And when he came to the church in this city, he saw that they also had statues near the altar, and these statues were prettier than those in the church of the city from which he had come. So he began to hate the statues that he used to like, and told stories against them; and he began to like the new church and the new statues, and he went often and prayed to them, and gave them many presents. But, strange to say, he saw that he did not become any better. And when he looked more closely, he saw that all the policemen and the judges and all the people were just as cruel, wicked

and foolish as were those in the city from which he had come ; and so he felt very sad, and he wept.

“ While he sat weeping, there passed that way a traveller, who stopped and asked the boy why he wept, and the boy told him. Then the traveller pitied the poor boy and loved him ; and he said to the boy, ‘ I too lived in a city where the people were cruel, wicked and foolish ; and I left the city and became a wanderer, and I am going from place to place, trying to find a city where the people are not cruel, wicked or foolish. I have already been to many places, and I have not yet found the city where the people are good ; but I shall continue my journey, and hope that I may at last find what I seek.’

“ And when the boy heard these words he fell down on his knees before the traveller, and begged to go with him. And the traveller bent down and raised the poor boy up, and embraced him and said that he would take him as a companion. So the traveller took the hand of the boy, and they travelled together.

“ They travelled on for a long time from city to city, for many years ; and the traveller’s hair became grey with age, and the boy had grown to be a man ; but they had not yet found the city of the good. And the travellers one day became weary, and they lay down by the roadside to rest them. While they were reclining on the ground, they each dreamt a beautiful dream ; and when they awoke the elder traveller said to the younger one, ‘ Behold ! I have dreamt a most wonderful and beautiful dream ; shall I tell it you ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, tell it me,’ replied the younger traveller, ‘ for I, too, have dreamt a most beautiful dream ; but first tell me yours, and when you have told your dream I will tell you mine.’ ‘ I dreamt,’ said the elder

traveller, 'that a most sweet voice spoke to me and said, "My son : thou art now near the Good City in which is my Holy Temple ; enter therein, and bring with thee thy neighbour, and behold and worship. Then shall ye be joyful, and shall abide among the blessed forever."'

"Then spoke the younger traveller, 'Lo ! I did dream the very same dream. Let us, therefore, look around us, and see whether the sweet voice in the dream spoke the truth ; let us see if the Good City and the Holy Temple are near.'

"And they both looked around them, even to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west, but they could see no Temple.

"Then said the elder traveller, 'Look you, the mountains are before us ; let us go there, and it may be that the Good City and the Holy Temple which the sweet voice spoke of are hidden in the foot hills ; or they may be on the top of the high mountains ; or perhaps when we are on the top of the mountains we shall behold the Holy Temple on the other side.'

"Then they took up each his staff and travelled to the mountains ; but though they wandered about in every direction, they could not see the Good City or the Holy Temple. Wearied and footsore, both travellers began to bemoan their disappointment, and they made loud lamentations, and began each to curse the voice which they had heard in their dreams, saying it was a voice of deception.

"And as they were thus bemoaning and lamenting and cursing, there appeared unto them an aged man of most gentle mien. His face was serene and honest, and pity and love shone from his eyes ; his brow was lofty, and his step was firm and kingly. Coming up to

the travellers, he spoke to them and said, ' My neighbours and my brethren, why lament ye, and why do ye utter curses ? '

" And they told the reason of their lamenting and of their cursing ; how the sweet voice had deceived them, and how they could not find the Good City or the Holy Temple.

" ' Say not so,' replied the kingly stranger. ' Lament no more, and cease your cursing, for the sweet voice which spake unto you is the voice of your own immortal souls. Your souls have not deceived you ; the Good City, the Holy Temple, are indeed near.'

" ' Where ? ' eagerly asked the travellers, looking around them.

" ' Behold ! ' replied the kingly stranger. ' Behold it, then, here ;—this mountain, yonder plain, these streams, the sun, the trees, these flowers, the earth whereon you stand, the stars overhead and the vast ocean,—all these are the Holy Temple. Enter ye into it, and take for teacher, priest and minister the sun-beam, the flower, the grain of sand, the leaf of the tree, and colour and sound and sight, and study diligently now and all the days of your lives. Then shall a holy light be kindled in your souls, and ye shall be inspired with the heavenly music of the All-Father and the One-Father. And when ye shall have entered into the Temple, and shall have caused your neighbours and brethren to enter likewise, then shall sweet and holy peace embrace you, and crown you all children of the Most High and only God.' "

" Oh, Papa," exclaimed Alice, " what a beautiful story ! Do tell us another ! "

" Not to-night, Alice," I said. " But tell me, what does this story teach you ? "

"It teaches," she answered, "that God's Holy Temple, God's Holy Church, are the things which God has made."

"Yes," I replied, "you are right. And now, Walter, what does all this teach you?"

"It teaches me," he answered, "that just as a man who believes in idols may go to a Christian church and still be an idolater, so a Christian who does not know much of God's works, nor love them, may also be called an idolater."

"You have answered rightly," I said.

And now, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not deem it proper to take up more of your time. You can judge from my recital what changes have taken place in my opinion and in the opinion of my wife and children. I now unhesitatingly stand for Truth and for Progress. I am now a firm convert to the idea presented by our worthy president.





CHAPTER XLVI

BEAUTY, EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : If you were surprised at the radical change of opinion in Mr. Bradley, you will, no doubt, be even more surprised when you hear my story.

For some few days after the conclusion of our preceding sessions the subject of our contention came now and then to my mind; faintly at first, and more strongly as time went on. This, not in orderly logical sequence, but in a form jumbled and incoherent.

One thing hovered vaguely but continuously in my mind, however, and that was a semi-triumphant impulse to declare myself invincible. Had I not met all the contending arguments and utterly demolished them? Had not the contestants gone down before my reasoning and logic as saplings fall before a keen-edged axe? Presently, however, the dim outline of a mysterious doubt began to make itself manifest. It caused me to interrogate myself. Why was it that I made no headway in convincing those against whom I contended? Was it because their comprehension was too feeble? Were my power of reasoning and the keenness of my

logic too much for their understanding? For a time I thought so, and thus quieted my rising doubts. I finally came to the conclusion that, in good season, my former adversaries would reconsider their unjustifiable objections and would come over to my side,—to the stronger, clearer and more logical side.

But, strange to say, the doubt remained. Again and again I tried to banish it, but still it returned stronger than ever, until at last, in a surly mood, I determined to re-weigh the principal contentions, and to see if there were any weak or fallible conclusions on my side.

The first important point that presented itself to me for this final test was my conclusion as to the mode of procedure for the amelioration of the social and economic condition of the industrial class. I had contended that this amelioration could be effected by coercive physical force. I had shown that on the one hand there existed already the force of concentrated wealth, and that on the other hand there was a possibility of a much stronger force,—that of organised effort by the masses. I therefore concluded that the much stronger force of the organised masses could with ease subdue the weaker force of concentrated wealth. Was not this a most logical conclusion? So it seemed, until the flaw in the reasoning appeared to my mind.

What was the flaw? This,—which the president pointed out at a former meeting; that the force of concentrated wealth is reinforced by the additional force of the monopoly of learning. These two forces, united and inseparable, are much stronger than the force of mere numbers. I then clearly realised that the clash between concentrated wealth and concentrated numbers must always end in the victory of wealth, so long as wealth is reinforced by learning.

The next logical step in the inquiry was the question : Might not concentrated numbers acquire the additional force of learning, and thus, and forever, overthrow the tyranny of wealth ? And I came to the conclusion that under our present system this is an impossibility. For, first of all, concentrated numbers may only obtain that measure of learning which the conditions of their environment permit ; second, this environment is shaped, not only by the conditions imposed upon it by the concentrated wealth force, but likewise, and in an equally powerful manner, by the predominant religious systems.

There can, therefore, be no amelioration in the condition of the industrial classes through force ; nor can they possess themselves of the additional force of learning until such time as there shall be brought about a radical change in the factors which produce their environment.

How to modify the factor of environment became, therefore, a leading question. And, reflect as I would, I could discern no other avenue than through a radical change in the religious system. There must be a change in the religious theme, and this change, I had contended, in common with all radical reformers, should come through the abolition of religion. It is true that certain vague doubts had arisen in my mind as to the absolute conclusiveness of this position ; but these doubts I had contemptuously brushed aside, as a bully brushes aside a feeble antagonist whom he cannot overcome by argument. Yet the doubts returned and seemed to persist. Again and again I tried to drive them out, but could not. So persistently present were these doubts that they tended greatly to disturb my peace of mind. They interfered with the current of

all my thoughts, caused me to blunder in my work, to give incoherent answers and kept me awake the greater part of the night. At last, I came to a conclusion : I determined to review the subject once and for all, and, if possible, to enter into the question with my mind free from any preconceived notions.

This conclusion, once in my mind, restored me to my normal condition. It is true that at one time I almost felt ashamed of my resolution, deeming it weakness ; but then, I reasoned, no one else need know of this personal contention, and if I finally succeed in forcing these doubts out of my mind, they will remain conquered for good.

And so I began : First, I reasoned, there was no use in going over the Bible ; I knew that it contained statements on almost every page, and in almost every paragraph, irreconcilable with my mode of thought. I therefore took up ethics. There could be no question about the authority of ethics, nor could any system be valid or tenable unless built on an ethical foundation. To abolish the evils of the present system was to replace them with good. The good had necessarily to be ethical, and the evil unethical. The question then arose, what is this which we call ethics ? And the answer came to me, it is a way,—a pathway of good. What kind of good ? And all that I could see from my then point of view was that it was a kind of good which might remove some restrictions from the masses and thus enable them to enlarge their incomes.

What then ? What satisfaction would it be to me to know that sundry men, women and children had more roast beef, or better shelter, or better fitting garments ? What greater satisfaction than in seeing the rich possess these things ? Why should I strive for this ? And

a faint echo answered, "For humanity's sake." Query then took up the strain, and asked, "What is humanity?" And a motley, heterogeneous throng of men, women and children passed before my mind's eye. What was I to them? What were they to me?

They suffered. So do horses and goats. Should I take upon myself the task of ameliorating the condition of horses and goats? Why of humanity any more than of brutes? Or, was I to labour for the amelioration of humanity in order that my condition, too, might thereby be ameliorated? Must I wait for my share of amelioration until, by my effort, all mankind were benefited? Would it not be an easier task to seek amelioration for myself, and for myself alone? And what then? Supposing that I had found amelioration, that I had found a way of getting better food, better garments, better shelter and an accumulation of money, should I then be happy? Should I then be any better off than a hog in better quarters?

Perplexed and sorrowful, I took up the Bible and read: "For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour."

I threw the book aside. "Shall it profit me to increase my weight and to multiply my possessions?" I thought. "Yea, that would profit the worm which may in the end consume my body in the grave." And in my grief I cried aloud, "God help me!"

That cry, uttered in the trouble of my soul, meant for no ear but my own, was heard by a friend, a pious

and noble woman, Mrs. Kirchner, my landlady. She knocked at my door, and I bade her enter. "You are troubled; let me read to you," said she. So she took up the Bible which I had thrown aside, and, opening it reverently, she read: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." "Please read no more," I said to her; "I will try to think on what you have just read." Closing the book, she placed it on the table and quietly left the room.

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Wisdom of men? No, surely. The power of God? Is there a God? I tried to think, but my mind became confused, and I stared blankly at the wall opposite. Gradually and unconsciously my attention was attracted to an object on the mantel shelf. It was a plaster cast of Juno, that goddess of the ancient Romans and Greeks. The darkened room seemed to soften the proud majesty of the classic outline, and my eyes rested upon it with pleasure.

"Speak to me, goddess of old; speak to me of the gods. Tell me, ancient queen of heaven,—tell me that which shall comfort my soul and give me hope."

I gazed intently on the figure until, from mere restlessness, I was about to turn my eyes away; but I could not do so. The object before me held me spellbound, and I continued to stare at it fixedly. Of a sudden, the words of our president came to my mind. Going to the bureau, I took from thence my copy of his remarks and read:

"Let anyone contemplate the unattractive straight line; then, in his mind's eye, let him see this line inclined in various graceful curves. He will be surprised

to discover that those curves and lines which are pronounced artistic are in effect rhythmic and harmonious.

“ Three bold curves to the right must be mated by three bold curves to the left. In other words, not Beauty alone, but also the soul of Equity and Justice is here personified and materialised. This is true in embroidery, it is true in architecture, it is true in geometry, it is true in sculpture.

“ This principle is equally true in music, in the blending of colours. It is true in poetry and prose. It is true in logic and it is true in philosophy. It is also true in Justice, in Love, in Charity, in Inspiration and in Duty.

“ The type of this beauty has been provided for us by the Father of Justice, by the Father of Love and Mercy, by God Himself. We see it in the blade of grass, in the weed by the roadside. We see it in the trembling leaf on the tree and in the noble form of the tree itself. We see it in the insect, in the fish, in the snowflake, in the grain of sand, in the mountain, in the globule of water. And last, but by no means least, we see it in the soul of man.

“ Is there anything in the whole universe that does not show forth song and beauty? But one thing, and that is sin; and sin is the breaking of God's law.

“ Man, knowing all this, realising all this, feeling all this,—shall he then want for words of praise, shall he lack for prayers to help him on with a high resolve?”

“ So then,” I said, as I replaced the paper, and again contemplated the figure before me, “ the Greeks, by searching, found God through the harmony of concrete form. Yes, the beauty is there,—there in that figure; the beauty is there because harmony is there. And this harmony, is it not but another word for equity, for

justice? Let me test it." And, hastily rising, I went over to the mantel shelf, picked up a tack-hammer and gave the figure a sharp, sudden blow, which chipped off a piece of the nose. I was startled to see the effect; for the figure was no longer beautiful. It was now hideously grotesque and ugly. Seating myself, I again tried to contemplate it, but the distorting ugliness disturbed my mind, so I removed the object from its place and threw it into the waste basket.

When I had again seated myself, a new train of thought incidental to my recent experience filled my mind. Instinctively, I drew my chair to the table; lighting my lamp, I took up a pencil and began tracing lines on some paper before me. I was fairly conversant with the art of free-hand drawing; indeed, it is a necessary part of my trade. I had, however, up to that time felt no special inclination for any artistic effort. But now I was animated with an intense desire to produce artistic designs. It was late when I retired, and I had used up all the paper before me. The next day I laid in a stock of paper, and also procured a set of drawing instruments, and I continued using all my spare time in this, to me, new field of investigation. Desiring to overcome promptly some technical difficulties, I took lessons from a competent teacher.

As a result of all this effort I made rapid progress, nor did I confine my investigation and study to this subject alone. My attention was also attracted to the various branches of my daily work, and, as you may know, there is ample scope in cabinet-making, at which I am employed, for the practical application of this theme.

The rapid advance which I made in artistic designing was, no doubt, due almost entirely to my zeal and

to the cause which actuated it. This zeal, likewise, largely entered into all my labour, and incidentally raised me in the estimation of my employer who, from having previously considered me in the light of an agitator and an indifferent workman, began now, under the changed condition, to give me more than ordinary consideration.

One morning, about three weeks ago, he called me into the office and said, " Mr. Fisher, we are about considering the adoption of our designs for next season's output. Can you suggest any changes?" " I can submit some drawings I have at home," I replied, " and you may use them for comparison." " I shall be glad to see them," he answered.

On returning from dinner, I brought them and placed them on his desk. A week ago I was called to the office, and was told that a number of my designs were accepted without change, and that several of them were accepted with modifications. I was also told that the new designs would be made under my supervision, and at a considerable advance in wages.

The change in my mode of conduct did not escape the notice of my fellow-workmen. At first the comments that reached me were harsh and sinister, but latterly some of them have been favourable. I now also observe from among them followers in the path of progress.

I would not have thus taken up the valuable time of this association by the recital of my personal affairs, were it not that I am constrained to do so to this extent in order to give you a clear conception of the important incidents which have caused me to change my former opinions.

It is far from my mind, in relating this incident, to

present it as a personal exploit. I have told it simply as an illustration to show that the development of the artistic faculties has a material as well as a spiritual value. So far as I am concerned, the spiritual is of infinitely greater importance to me than is the material value.





CHAPTER XLVII

THE ABSOLUTE PRINCIPLE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Fisher (continuing).—Nor have my inquiries been confined to the field of this illustration alone. Whatever time I could spare I have diligently employed in investigations ; and, generalising upon all this, I have come to the following conclusions :

Proposition One : Any system of ethics is untenable and meaningless unless there be in the universe an absolute principle of righteousness with which man must bring himself into harmony, in order to insure his highest state of happiness.

Proposition Two : If there is no absolute principle of righteousness in the universe, there can then be no absolute meaning or absolute merit in ethical conduct.

The primary question now follows: Is there an absolute principle of righteousness in the universe, or is there not ?

This was the question which presented itself to my mind. So long as it remained unanswered, so long would my mind be troubled with unrest. So long as it remained unanswered, I could find no rest in belief or in unbelief. And so I spent days and nights in thinking over the subject, but without being able to

come to any conclusion. One Saturday evening I was prompted to take up pen and paper, and to write. I wrote until midnight ; and when I was through, I had the following :

IS THE UNIVERSE ABSOLUTELY ETHICAL ?

First Statement : There are objects in the world.

Second Statement : The objects in the world are absolute entities or they are not.

Third Statement : If absolute entities, they are primary causes, and if primary causes they must forever retain the form in which they originally were.

Fourth Statement : The objects of the world do not remain in any fixed form, but are acted upon and modified.

Fifth Statement : Being acted upon and modified, objects cannot be absolute entities ; not being absolute entities, they therefore must be manifestations.

Sixth Statement : Manifestations necessarily involve the existence of a Power which manifests.

Seventh Statement : The Power which manifests must necessarily be an Absolute Entity.

Eighth Statement : This Absolute Entity must necessarily be the Spiritual Archetype of the forms and phases of manifestation ; for otherwise the forms and phases of manifestation would be contrary to the will and nature of the Absolute Entity. There would, then, be no single absolute entity, but a plurality of absolute entities.

Ninth Statement : A plurality of absolute entities would permit of no change whatever ; but as we see that there are changes, we must necessarily admit that there cannot be a plurality of absolute entities.

Tenth Statement : It must therefore and necessarily

follow that there is One and Only One Absolute Entity, and that He is the Spiritual Designer of the forms and phases of manifestation.

The question now presented itself : In what form are the phases of manifestation ? And are these forms types of spiritual significance ? And again I recalled the words of our president : " Let anyone contemplate the unattractive straight line ; then, in his mind's eye, let him see this line inclined in various graceful curves. He will be surprised to discover that those curves and lines which are pronounced artistic are in effect rhythmic and harmonious.

" Three bold curves to the right must be mated by three bold curves to the left. In other words, not Beauty alone, but also the soul of Equity and Justice is here personified and materialised. This is true in embroidery, it is true in architecture, it is true in geometry, it is true in sculpture.

" This principle is equally true in music, in the blending of colours. It is true in poetry and prose. It is true in logic and it is true in philosophy. It is also true in Justice, in Love, in Charity, in Inspiration and in Duty."

Hence follows :

Eleventh Statement : As the phases of manifestation are in forms representative of harmony or equity, it must necessarily follow that the Absolute Entity is made manifest to us through harmony and equity, that forms and phases are but concrete terms or types of spiritual justice.

Twelfth Statement : From the foregoing statement it logically follows that the Absolute Entity must necessarily be just. Being the Only Absolute Entity, and being just, He must necessarily be absolutely just.

The Absolute Entity is, therefore, Absolute Justice, and this is but another name for God.

CONCLUSION ON THIS HEAD

There is One Only God, made manifest to us through His works.

This God is the absolute and primary source of ethics.

God is, therefore, the Spiritual Archetype of ethics.

And now we may continue the theme, but under a different subdivision. And right here it is deemed proper to re-state the original propositions. These were :

Proposition One : Any system of ethics is untenable and meaningless unless there be in the universe an absolute principle of righteousness with which man must bring himself into harmony in order to insure his highest state of happiness.

Proposition Two : If there is no absolute principle of righteousness in the universe there can then be no absolute meaning or absolute merit in ethical conduct.

But inasmuch as my reasoning brought me to the conclusion that there was a God, and that God was the Spiritual Archetype of ethics, I saw therefore that ethics was tenable, that it had an absolute meaning and that it possessed absolute merit. I saw also that ethical conduct was absolutely necessary to the attainment of the highest state of happiness. To admit this, we must further admit that unethical conduct must lead toward absolute unhappiness.

From all this, I came to the following final conclusions :

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

First Conclusion : That which is contrary to ethics is

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contrary to universal law, contrary to God ; and is, therefore, inequitable, unjust, discordant, injurious and destructive.

Second Conclusion : Obedience in the highest degree to the dictates of ethical laws would bring us into harmony with God.

Third Conclusion : Before we can obey ethically, we must first learn the lessons that lead to an understanding of universal law.

Fourth Conclusion : The Church ought to be the principal and most potent factor for inculcating the lessons that lead to an understanding of universal law.

Fifth Conclusion : In so far as the Church to-day endeavours to teach ethics without the evidence of those manifestations which prove ethics to be real, it thus far lacks proof.

Sixth Conclusion : Any lack of proof on the part of the Church must and does tend to generate scepticism, hypocrisy, atheism and pessimism.

Seventh Conclusion : These qualities, in turn, must and do generate selfishness, cruelty and misery, which are the main causes of the inequality in the distribution of wealth and of the inequality in the social status of the people.

Eighth Conclusion : The Church is composed of the people that support it.

Ninth Conclusion : Whenever the people demand that the Church shall teach ethics in harmony with the laws with which God has surrounded us, there exists no reason why their demand should not be complied with.

No sooner had I arrived at these conclusions than I began to feel a sense of great relief. To make sure that what I had set forth was no illusion, I went over

the Propositions, the Statements and the Conclusions again and again, but all this seemed to strengthen the belief that I had at last found the road to faith.

And then a new question presented itself. If the concrete objects of the world teach us that God is made manifest through harmony, may we not, likewise, discern the same law operative in the mind and soul of man? For some days I tried hard to find a reasonable, tangible answer to that question, but I could find none. While it was possible for me to find evidences in abundance so far as concrete objects were concerned, I could not find the same tangible evidences to aid me in solving the problem of the soul. Can I read what is locked up in the soul of this, that or the other man? How can I ever know? How can such a problem ever be solved? Then, like a flash, the thought came to my mind: If it is impossible for me to scrutinise the operation of the law in the minds of others, is it not possible for me to scrutinise the operation of the law in my own mind?

"I will try," was my resolve, and I began as follows: Originally a believer in dogmatic religion, I had seemed to find in it satisfaction for my spiritual needs, until I entered into a critical examination of its proofs of reality.

When criticism proved this belief untenable, I discarded it, and in its place came agnosticism, and finally atheism. These, in turn, brought pessimism as a final end. This seemed intolerable. Hence arose a desire, a blind desire, to shake myself free from the spell of gloom which obscured my soul. Then came wild and vehement impulses to attribute the discord within me to any and all causes that my imagination might conjure up. But the real cause of the discord I now see

clearly. To remove my unhappiness, I must replace discord by harmony. Harmony with what? With what but universal law? And when I perceived this conclusion, I perceived that the soul of man in no wise differs in manifestation of the will of God from all other objects of God's manifestations. I likewise perceived that happiness is the reward of the soul for being in harmony with the will of God, and that pain is the penalty of the soul for being in discord with the will of God.

This conclusion awakened me from a dream, a terrible, hideous dream, that had endured for years of doubt, of unbelief, of pessimism, of torpid, deep and settled gloom. And as the bright rays of faith entered my mind and illuminated my soul, the clouds of despondency vanished, and I realised that I was free.

I then realised that the God who reveals Himself through nature, who speaks to us through the law, the order and the harmony that everywhere pervade, speaks to us also through the soul, through humanity. Our minds are restless and unsatisfied until, beneath the seeming discord and confusion and strife in the world, there is discerned an underlying, unifying principle that indicates order and harmony. And as we are filled with satisfaction when we discover law and order in the universe, so similarly do we experience peace of mind when we recognise the moral order which is as real as the physical order.

The twofold problem of ethics, then, is to recognise this twofold realm,—the physical order and the moral order,—and to conform our lives to it.

I may now say, in conclusion, that since my conversion to this idea I have again on various occasions read the Bible with great pleasure and profit. I can now

see clearly the cause of my previous atheism. I had been taught to accept the entire Bible as the inspired word of God. This I could by no means do ; and rather than become a hypocrite I chose to reject it entirely. I now see that the Bible is the work of many writers who lived many hundreds of years apart.

I see now that, like many other books of antiquity, it contains legends, allegories, parables, tradition, history and inspiration, so intermingled as to make it exceedingly difficult for even the most intelligent minds to distinguish among them. Apart from all this, however, I now see clearly the intrinsic worth of the Bible. It is invaluable as an aid in up-building. I now study it in its harmony with universal law.

Realising all this now, I find a charm and an inspiration in the Bible which I did not find in it before. But of infinitely higher value is that grander, loftier, truer and nobler Bible, ever present before us in the objects with which the infinite God has surrounded us. Like a kind and loving father, He has placed us in His great Kindergarten to learn the lessons His wisdom deems good for us to know.





CHAPTER XLVIII

BELIEF FREED FROM IDOLATRY

Ezra.—Mr. Quail, the third speaker, will now take the floor.

Mr. Quail.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : I believe that the intrinsic value of rational debate as a means of higher education is much greater than is commonly thought. The debate is certainly far more effective in education than is mere book-reading. It seems to force out distinctly the cardinal features of a theme. It serves not only to bring out in clear relief the opinions held by any individual debater, but also to bring out as clearly the opinions to which he is opposed. It recapitulates the affirmative and negative phases in so vivid and striking a manner as to cause a much deeper impression on the mind than can be produced by any other mode of education, and this in the shortest possible space of time.

A peculiar feature of the results of debate appears in the fact that while during the debate, or sometimes at its conclusion, no one seems to have changed or modified his own opinions, yet subsequent investigation shows modifications of opinion to have resulted. As an illustration, permit me to relate some personal experiences.

For some time after our last adjournment there was a confused recurrence to my mind of my previous impressions. Among them two facts presented themselves in clear outline : one, that our meetings had been held ; the other, that certain propositions made by the president had been shown to be evidently untenable.

It is true that on several occasions some doubts arose as to the untenability of the president's propositions, but these doubts were set aside with ease. Can it be possible, I thought, that the whole world is wrong, and that the president of our association is right ? Absurd ; and so I easily managed to dismiss the matter with the thought that, while the president no doubt meant well, his proposal, being untenable, required no further serious consideration. I could not then see or understand that the actual impressions remaining on my mind as a result of our debate were much deeper than was perceived by me on the surface. The following incident, however, served to illustrate that such was the fact.

About a month after adjournment of our last debate an elderly man, familiarly known as Uncle George, and his wife, Aunt Dinah, came to visit my family. They are distant relatives, and live in the interior of Georgia. Time does not permit me to give a detailed description of them. Sufficient to say that they are fair average samples of the Southern negro, of the farm-hand type, illiterate and good-natured.

On the evening of the next day, on my return from work, I found Uncle George and Aunt Dinah engaged in a religious discussion, which they ceased shortly after my arrival. After supper they again took up the theme. I then asked permission to join in, which was cheerfully granted.

I was informed that the subject of discussion was the conversion of a grandchild of theirs from the Baptist religion to Catholicism. Uncle George was of the opinion that this step doomed their grandchild to eternal punishment in the hereafter.

"I can't see," said Aunt Dinah, "how they can have punishment by fire forever. It seems to me," she continued, "that they would burn up in a few minutes."

"So they do," replied Uncle George. "They burn up sure in a few minutes; but the devil makes them alive again in the twinkling of an eye, and they burn up again, and they keep this up forever."

"Do you believe, Uncle George," I said, "that the good Lord would permit any such thing?"

"I believe," answered Uncle George, "that if the people in hell could get out, and could get to Heaven, and go before the throne of God, and fall down on their knees praying, then God would let them stay in Heaven; but, when they are once in hell the devil has them forever. For God is ruler of Heaven and the devil is ruler of hell."

"Well, Uncle George," I continued, "you said that your grandchild, having left the Baptist Church and joined the Catholic Church, would be doomed to eternal punishment hereafter. Do you really believe that?"

"I do."

"Do you believe that the Catholics are doomed to eternal punishment because they are not Baptists?"

"I do," he replied. "What would be the use of sticking to the Baptist religion if Catholics could go to Heaven too?"

"Do you know that Catholics deny what you say, and claim, on the contrary, that Catholics go to Heaven and that Baptists go to an eternal hell?"

"Yes, I heard so," he replied; "but it is not true."

The conversation ceased, and I soon went to my room, perplexed and worried, though at what I did not clearly know. Instinctively I took up a copy of the report of our meetings. I began to turn over the pages, when my eyes alighted on some words which riveted my attention. They were the remarks of Mr. Bradley, and I read:

"Our evils to-day come because we believe that God has attributes that He has not. The Roman Catholic, for instance, asserts that God is just; but in the same moment he will not hesitate to assert that Presbyterians and Baptists and Jews and Unitarians are doomed to eternal damnation because they are not Roman Catholics. Now Presbyterians assert the very same thing concerning all who are not Presbyterians. And all the other sects and religious systems are likewise unjust and uncharitable.

"Clearly, if all these assertions were true, the world would be consigned to an eternity of superhuman terror. These assumptions are so palpably unjust and barbarous as to destroy the idea of justice by distorting it. What wonder, then, that, as a result of this distortion of truth, we have scepticism, atheism and pessimism? What wonder that we have hypocrisy, injustice, cruelty, barbarism and selfishness?"

"True, only too true," I thought, as I replaced the paper.

The next day I took a holiday, and stayed at home all the forenoon. In the afternoon, feeling restless, I left the house for a walk. I continued walking until I had reached Central Park, which I entered. The air was mild, and the afternoon sun cast a pleasant glow over all the landscape. I walked on through the Park

for some time, and finally, feeling tired, seated myself on a bench placed near a foot-path a little way back from the broad carriage road. There I sat, watching absent-mindedly the line of brilliant equipages that passed before me.

Presently I observed a person who had turned off from the path and was approaching the bench upon which I was seated. He was an elderly man, white-haired, well dressed, and of benevolent and amiable appearance. He walked slowly, leaning upon a cane ; and, when he had reached the bench, he took a seat upon the farther end, bowing to me as he did so. Thereupon he removed his hat, and, drawing his handkerchief from his pocket, passed it across his forehead. As he did so, I noticed that some object fell to the ground. I stooped and picked it up. It was a pair of spectacles.

"Thank you," he said with a smile, as I returned them to him. "I should not have known what to do without them."

"Then you depend upon them for reading?" I observed.

"Yes, I am obliged to use glasses, not only for reading, but for all my work at the college."

"So you teach in a college?" I ventured.

"I am professor there," he replied.

It seemed hardly polite to ask any further questions, and for some moments I was silent. But his reply had suggested an idea to me. My mind had been disturbed and unsettled. I had been considering questions on which I was unable, without aid, to come to any conclusions. I should welcome help. Here was someone who could perhaps give me exactly the assistance I needed. His appearance indicated good-will and

friendliness. Why not improve the opportunity that had presented itself? I would do so.

"Pardon me, sir," I therefore began, "but you tell me you are a professor in a college. There are points on which I have been lately seeking information. If you have no objection, I should like to ask you a few questions."

"Proceed," he replied. "Ask your questions, and I will try to answer them."

I thanked him, but, try as I would, I could not frame the questions; so, with some embarrassment, I told him I would first state the case in the hope that the questions would present themselves.

He observed my embarrassment. "Begin in your own way," he said. "I have plenty of time."

Thus reassured, I gave him a brief sketch of our association, outlined the debate now before us, and narrated my afternoon's experience with Uncle George and Aunt Dinah.

He listened with attention. "I observe," said he, when I had concluded, "that you are puzzled and perplexed by the conflict of opinions. You are especially surprised at the low state of development of the persons you describe; but all this is a natural stage in the history of development,—is as natural in psychology as it is in geology. In geology, for instance, we sometimes find exposed strata from the earlier geologic periods alongside the more recent formations. In sociology we find examples of earlier stages of development alongside those of more recent times. On almost every thoroughfare we can see examples of people who are of primitive minds, who represent, in their state of development, some type that predominated in the past. The people you mention, while actually living at almost the

beginning of the twentieth century, are in reality types that predominated centuries ago."

"Will you please explain more in detail?" I said.

"I am much interested."

"Well: observe the people passing here," continued the professor. "Some few are representative in their development, of the nineteenth century, some very few of the twentieth or twenty-first, but the majority are representative of the eighteenth, fifteenth, tenth or fifth century, or even earlier times. The same is the case with nations. The United States and England, for instance, are representative of the twentieth century; Germany and France of the nineteenth. Behind these come the other countries, such as Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Austria and Scandinavia. Then comes Italy, then Russia, then Spain, then Turkey, then China, and so on down the grade until we come to the Digger Indians of California or the Fuegians and Patagonians, who bring us back to the stone age."

"But," I said, "so far as concerns the people of whom I first spoke, the negroes of this country, is there any reason why they should hold the primitive views they do? Is not this low state largely due to lack of progressive education?"

"To some extent, yes," he replied; "but not altogether. The parts which compose the body modify slowly, but slower yet are modifications of the mind. Before there can be any development, there must be a displacement of the elementary by more complex ideas. Complex ideas are apprehended with great difficulty, and at the expense of hard mental effort and much time."

"Do not primitive ideas involve low conceptions and low tendencies," I asked, "and do not these

conceptions and tendencies generate the impulse to cruelty and inhumanity ? ”

“ They do certainly,” he replied ; “ but in time, and under favourable conditions, the primitive ideas are modified.”

“ Is time the factor ? ”

“ No, not time alone ; time and favourable conditions.”

“ What if favourable conditions be wanting ? ”

“ Then there can be no progress.”

“ But,” I inquired, “ does the negro alone hold the opinions of which I speak, or do the majority of the white people also hold them ? ”

“ The majority of white people also hold them ; but in some cases they hold them theoretically, or, in other words, by tacit acquiescence.”

“ Will you please explain that point more fully ? ”

“ Well,” replied the professor, “ they hold these ideas in theory, as a matter of creed, by grace of custom, and to some extent by force of heredity ; but the ideas are not altogether actively conscious beliefs. I mean that the people seem to believe ; but their belief is not intrinsically real,—it only seems real.

“ To explain still further, so that there may be no possibility of misunderstanding, I will illustrate : A very young child, no doubt, actually believes in the reality of Santa Claus. As the child grows older, modifications of this belief take place as the result of doubt, until, in the end, belief in the reality of Santa Claus has entirely faded away. In the case of your Uncle George and Aunt Dinah, were they really to witness any physical pain of their grandchild ; were anyone, for instance, in their presence to do their grandchild great bodily harm, they would soon manifest a

real and emotional frenzy of sympathy which would materialise in frantic attempts at prevention. But the same case, when placed before them as a question of religious faith, is, as you see, otherwise disposed of, and in too calm and judicial a manner to represent really the actual nature of either."

"Is this inconsistency due to scepticism?"

"To some extent, yes, but not necessarily so altogether; for, as I said before, people hold these matters of faith or forms of creed by grace of custom, and through the law of heredity, as a result of individual training and as the effect of environment."

"Does not this condition tend to generate barbarism, selfishness, cruelty and misery?" I asked.

"It does," he replied; "but these evils constitute a concomitant phase of the primitive state. Under favourable conditions this phase will disappear, and a higher development will take its place."

"If now the majority of whites and blacks hold these primitive ideas," I said, "must it not follow that this majority are necessarily selfish and cruel, and must it not likewise follow that, because of all this, the majority live in poverty and misery?"

"It must so follow," he answered.

"Would not higher education of this majority tend toward the amelioration of their condition?"

"It would," he replied.

"And the primitive state of this majority — is not the Church to be held responsible for it?"

"Yes, to some extent. But the Church is, as you know, composed of two divisions: the priests or ministers on the one hand, and the people on the other. Were the priests and ministers to be in advance of their congregations to any great degree, there would result

a state of incongruity between them which would produce discord and dissolution. Were any single minister to attempt the substitution of progressive ideas for old ideas in advance of the general education of his people, he would be likely to be charged with heresy, and made to recant or lose his livelihood."

"Then what should be done," I asked, "to promote general happiness, and to abolish the evils which an undeveloped state forces upon us?"

"Time alone can solve that problem," he replied.

"But," I remarked, "I thought you said, a short time ago, that time alone was not sufficient; that, in addition to time, favourable conditions also were necessary. Am I correct?"

"Yes."

"Then which is the more necessary, time or favourable conditions?"

"Favourable conditions."

"As these facts are known," I observed, "why do not the learned men, the professors, take the question up?"

"They do," he answered, "as far as they are permitted to."

"Permitted!" I remarked in astonishment. "Are they not, above all others, free to teach, to expound and to promulgate?"

"No, they are not nearly so free to do so as you may suppose. The profession of educator takes, as you know, many years of preparation, and, once acquired, it becomes to many a man his only source of livelihood. Any marked deviation from the usual course would soon bring down upon the deviator the displeasure of the regents or trustees, and cause him, in all likelihood, to lose his place."

“ It would appear, then, that there are two antagonistic forces at work ? ”

“ Yes, there is on the one hand the dynamic or impelling force of conserved learning, and on the other is the static or stationary force of religion ; these act and react upon each other.”

“ Does this situation produce the best results for the happiness of mankind ? ”

“ In one respect it does ; for the static force compels the dynamic force to prove all its data with exactness ; and the dynamic force compels the static force to shift its ground from time to time, as it does under the name of instituting reforms. You may observe even now,” the professor continued, “ that the static force is quietly shelving its once predominant theory of eternal punishment in a supernatural world, together with many other similarly untenable and primitive ideas.”

“ Is not this shifting from the untenable to the more tenable almost altogether confined to the class which possesses learning and wealth ? And has not this ever been the case, under every religious system ? ”

“ Yes, the shifting, reforming process is ever slow among the ranks of the illiterate and poor, so slow as to be almost imperceptible.”

“ And, inasmuch as the poor compose the majority of mankind,” I observed, “ must it not follow that the majority are in fact held in servitude by the static force, by the predominant religious systems ? ”

“ It must so follow,” he replied.

“ If it were possible to release the poor from this servitude, and in its place to give them the freedom which conserved and progressive learning would bring, would not such a change be of high advantage ? ”

“ Of the very highest,” said the professor ; “ for, as

it is to-day, the active labourers for peace and progress are comparatively the very few. Whenever these few shall have been multiplied to a much greater number it must necessarily follow that the unfavourable conditions of life will then be largely decreased, and the favourable conditions largely increased."

"How may this result be brought about?"

"That is a difficult question," he replied, "a most difficult one. In fact, it has ever been, and is to-day, the greatest of all human problems."

"What is it, then," I asked, "which makes religion a static force? Is it belief in God and in righteousness?"

"No, not that, but belief in untenable dogmas."

"Beliefs in these untenable dogmas seem, then, to be phases of idolatry, do they not?" I inquired.

"They do not merely seem to be," he answered; "they are, in fact, positively idolatrous, absolutely such."

"The problem, then," I remarked, "is to find a way for the elimination of the idolatrous phases from religious belief, is it not?"

"Yes, that is the problem."

"Have you a belief in God and in righteousness?" I asked.

"I surely have," he replied.

"And is that belief grounded on current theologic dogmas?"

"No, not in the least."

"On what then?"

"My belief is grounded," said the professor, "on those evidences of God's laws which everywhere and at all times surround us, evidences which we cannot for one moment lose sight of, even if we try."

"So the principal question is how to see, to hear and

to feel in harmony with universal law, is it not?" I observed.

"Yes," he replied, "and, above all, how to think in harmony with universal law."

"Why would it not be a good idea for the people to abandon their idolatrous beliefs, and, instead, to adopt the same kind of belief that you and the other learned men hold?"

"It would certainly be a good idea; but, as I said before, the difficulties in the way render its accomplishment the greatest of all human problems."

"Why?"

"Because, as I have indicated," replied the professor, "any marked deviation from the usual course, by priest or minister on the one hand, or by professor of college or university on the other, would soon bring down upon the deviators the displeasure of the deacons, regents, or trustees, whose duty it seems to be to detect essential variations. It is the fear of losing their livelihood which compels college and university professors to heed the adage, 'Among wolves, one must howl a little.'"

"What if the people, or some of the people," I suggested, "were to build up by themselves this new belief, this belief which you subscribe to, a belief freed from idolatry?"

"How could it be done?" he inquired.

"I do not know," I answered.

"Well, then," he remarked, "we have neither of us been able to solve the greatest of all human problems."

At this point our conversation ceased. The afternoon was drawing to a close, and the sun's rays no longer cast upon the spot where we were sitting the warmth which the old professor had evidently sought. So, rising, he responded politely to my thanks, bade

me good-afternoon and walked away. He did not volunteer his name, nor did I ask it ; but it was with deep gratitude that I watched the slowly-moving, grey-haired figure until it disappeared from view.

It is needless for me to detain you longer. You all, no doubt, now realise how I stand on this question. But, so as to leave no room for any conjecture whatever, I say unhesitatingly that I am in full accord with the proposition of our worthy president. Whether it can ever be materialised I do not at this time know. I fervently hope for its success, for on it depends, as I believe, much for which we should reverently pray and sturdily work.





CHAPTER XLIX

THE MOTHER CHURCH

Ezra.—The fourth speaker will be Mr. Valanti.

Mr. Valanti.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am not at all surprised at the stand taken by the speakers who have preceded me. Had I been a member of any of the various sects they represent, I should, perhaps, have come to the same conclusions. I do not wonder that they turn in disgust from their several sects, and instinctively come over to that which will supply the desires which a loving God has graciously implanted in human hearts and in immortal souls. Art, first-born child of the Infinite, Beauty Supreme, Joy, Heaven, Index, Road, Path! Yes, Art points unerringly to Him, the Effulgent, the Alpha and the Omega of Beauty. He is our God, even the God of the Holy Catholic Church.

No wonder, then, that the children of the first speaker saw the beauty of God stamped upon the trembling leaf, and in the harmonious, sweet-scented, symmetrical flower. What higher exaltation would they not have experienced had they, in addition, heard the divine strains of celestial music and feasted their young eyes on heavenly paintings! Yet all these things we of the

Mother Church, we of the Holy Catholic Church — all these things have we, and much more besides.

What fatal error, then, it was, when the distempered monk of Wittenberg caused the unholy schism which rent in twain the sacred curtain of God's sanctified temple! How many millions has this deed not robbed of earthly and heavenly rights and of pious pleasures! Come, Aryan brethren, come out from your sombre Semitic synagogues and enter with me into the sweet-scented, flower-bedecked and art-embellished temple of the living, loving Father. Then shall you pass from gloom into light, from dismal emptiness into beauteous environment. Come hither, and, in the Catholic Church, exchange the insipid soul-shrinking parody on music wailed forth in Protestant churches for the celestial strains of the world's masters in song. There, in the Catholic cathedral, you are in a house grandly adequate in design to meet the solemn demands of the God of Majesty.

And now it is fit that I answer some of the charges so gratuitously and unjustly hurled against the Catholic Church. It was the divine Master Himself who placed the sacred seal of election on Peter,—Peter the "Rock." To this Peter were given the Keys of Heaven, and to no one else. Many shall dash themselves against the Church, but the Rock shall stand firm and unshaken and forever.

Many unbelievers assert that Catholicism teaches the worship of graven images, the work of men's hands. Do not these vilifiers know that we worship God, kneeling before the image of a revered saint? Are we barbarians, that we should worship a saint's picture rather than God? Is not this mode of worship in accord with the true instincts of humanity? Is not

this a natural phase of divine worship implanted in the human heart? Why, even now, in this miniature rebellion against the Semitic asceticism, you who seek to escape the sombre meeting-house for the grander temple which your imaginations conjure up—did I not hear you say that you would revere the leaf, the tree and the flower because they are manifestations of God's work? And pray tell me, is not a saint likewise a manifestation of God's work, and a nobler one?

Much criticism has been indulged in here by dissenting sectaries, members of this club, against the Catholic Church because in times past the Church saw fit to permit only the learned in theological matters to read and interpret the Bible. Was not that a wise and reverent provision? Is it possible for every boor able to spell out words to decide, by his own dense ignorance, what is allegory, what is parable, what is history, what is tradition and what is inspiration, and to interpret all properly? What confusion has not this unregulated interpretation brought about! And the end is not yet.

The word "idolatry," too, has been freely bandied about in our deliberations; and, did one not know the truth, your remarks would lead him to class the Catholic Church with the fetich worship of Papua. Was not that word "idolatry" strained and twisted and tortured in order to squeeze out material for uncharitable comment?

To whom are words of love addressed? To whom are said the words, "Thou art the idol of my heart"? To the affianced, to the beloved and to the wife; and do the words give offence? Is such expression not a human expression, full of loving tenderness? Does not the infant behold in its mother and in its father objects of its adoration? Shall we condemn the infant

for idolatry ? Yet there is an evil which, although infinitely worse than idolatry, has here been scarcely censured at all ; and that evil is unbelief. The idolater believes, loves, worships. Though he may worship unwisely to-day and wisely to-morrow, there is always for him a haven, a refuge, an asylum of peace. But what perpetual torments should there not be for him who, out of sheer wantonness, denies the God whose mercy suffers him to cumber the earth ?

And now we come to the much-abused miracles of the Bible. How grandiloquent are the words of those who, with contempt and ridicule, assail the miracles ! They speak with the confident omniscience of gods on a theme concerning which they are and must ever remain in utter ignorance. Is God, then, limited, or is He almighty ? If limited, He must be finite, but if almighty, can He not do all things,—whatsoever He will ? These same objectors employ a name to conjure with ; they call on “ Science,”—and when they merely mention the word they expect all that hear them to bow to their own all-sufficient wisdom.

And what is Science ? Does it tell us what that is which we call space ? Does it tell us aught of absolute motion ? Do we know aught of absolute time ? Can we give an explanation of the existence of matter ? Do we know aught of the birthplace of universal force ? Science lays down a level, and says that the law of gravitation indicates the line of the horizontal whenever the bubble in the encased liquid is in the centre ; but can it tell aught of the absolute level ?

No ! On the question of absolute truth it is not a whit wiser than is the Digger Indian or the infant on the mother’s breast. Yet it talks and boasts and theorises as if it were lifelong partner of omnipotence.

Hypothesis crosses hypothesis in a labyrinth of confusion, and all its vauntings about the absolute are as mere child's babble.

And now it is proper to say a few words concerning the mysterious stranger, the scholarly professor, so picturesquely brought to our attention by the last speaker. This stranger is a full-fledged apostle of that scientific religion to which you, my friend, aspire. When asked if, in his opinion, the world could not be made better and happier through the general acceptance of the system of belief which he himself entertained, in place of that now in vogue, he affirmed stoutly that it could. When further asked why the work was not taken up by the learned professors, he in part replied : " It is the fear of losing their livelihood which compels college and university professors to heed the adage, ' Among wolves, one must howl a little.' " Yet here are slings and flings at Jesuits. Can anything more utterly selfish than this adage be attributed even to a Machiavelli ?

But while professors are afraid to tell the truth for fear of losing their positions, the many thousands of Catholic priests are not afraid to risk their lives, and they go fearlessly into the den of the leper or the hovel of the plague-stricken.

Great is thy faith and great is thy reverence, O Science ! Great is thy faith in the almighty dollar and great thy reverence for it. Thy feet hasten to the patent office, and when thou hast obtained thy patent then dost thou joyfully hie thee to establish a syndicate ; all for the glory of what ? For the benefit of whom ? Answer, my friends. I pause for an answer. What ? No answer ? For shame, to desert new friends so soon !

My friends, I perceive your dilemma, and I honour

your perplexity. Come then, all of you, into the loving bosom of Holy Mother Church, who stands with open arms ready to embrace and to receive you.

Within her sacred precinct you will find that ampler opportunity for which you seemingly so crave. Within her sacred precinct you will find ample scope and opportunity to aid and to uplift humanity. There will be found that grander theme to which your natures aspire. There will you find uplifting, ennobling, sanctifying Art, which is denied you without. And above all and beyond all, she offers the assurance of that blessed immortality promised by Him who gave His life a ransom for all that in simplicity and truth worship at His feet.

In this, my appeal to you, I include my honoured friend, the president of this association. Joyful, indeed, will be the day when the House of Israel shall join itself to the Catholic Church. We should, indeed, be ungrateful were Catholics ever to forget what they owe to the House of Israel. Japheth doth, indeed, dwell in the tent of Shem, but our elder brother Shem hath deserted his tent, and he hath been an exile and a wanderer, lo, these many years ! Come, then, my brother ! Come, brethren ; the Catholic Church, the Church Universal, is already here. Its doors are open, waiting for you. United, let us, at the beginning of this, the approaching twentieth century, strive for that highest good which it is the chief duty of the Christian to pursue on earth.





CHAPTER L

THE VAST POVERTY-STRICKEN HOST

Ezra.—The next speaker will be Mr. Moore, the censor of the evening.

Mr. Moore.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : Before attempting any criticism on what has been said by the speakers who preceded me, I deem it proper to relate some personal experiences in regard to the subject before us. I therefore request permission to vary from the usual mode of procedure by the censor. An additional reason for this request is the fact that my opinions on the subject have now undergone some radical changes.

Ezra.—What is the pleasure of the meeting ?

Bradley.—As this same privilege was extended to the censor at our last meeting, I move that Mr. Moore's request be granted.

The motion, having been seconded, was carried.

Mr. Moore.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen : I confess that at the conclusion of our last meeting, and for some time thereafter, I seemed to find satisfaction in the way in which the discussion had terminated. It seemed to me that the unanimous rejection of the proposition submitted was a triumph for Christianity. I

saw in our action a just rebuke to some new-fangled notions. The plan seemed to me designed to overturn the established order and, on its ruins, to institute a system of idolatry tinged with atheism.

To make sure that I was not mistaken, I spent a considerable part of my spare time in the public library, and read up on the subject. It is true that Herbert Spencer, in his *First Principles*, devotes a chapter to the "reconciliation" of the differences between Science and Religion; but, in common with almost all similar thinkers, he comes to the conclusion that "Science has been obliged to abandon these attempts to include within the boundaries of knowledge that which cannot be known, and has so yielded up to Religion that which of right belonged to it."

This reading but tended to confirm my opinion, and I felt convinced that the proposed remedy for the evils of our present social system was no remedy at all.

One evening, about a month after our last meeting, as I was sitting at supper at my boarding place, the subject again came to my mind. I fancied that the boarding-house dining-room had been transformed into one of the proposed new churches, that the pitcher of ice-water, the tall glass containing celery, and the pie, all in front of the landlady, were the water, the plant and the earth of the proposed new altar. Each of the boarders was pictured in my mind's eye as wearing a wreath of flowers bound around the head. So real and so absurdly grotesque did the picture seem that I laughed outright.

"What are you laughing at?" asked my landlady.

I could not reply, but laughed all the more, and all the boarders at the table looked at me inquiringly.

Feeling bound to give some explanation of my

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conduct, I did so by asking, "How would you like to see worshippers at church wearing garlands of flowers around their heads?"

No one of the boarders volunteered a reply, but all continued looking at me inquiringly for further information. I then gave a brief outline of the proposed Church Universal. My recital was followed by an animated conversation, in which all at the table took part. The theme gave rise to much merriment, and was treated by almost all as a joke.

After supper, as I was about to leave the room, one of the boarders, an elderly man, named Winslow, came over, seated himself by me, and said, "Mr. Moore, I should be glad to hear some further details of this proposed new church."

"I will give them to you with pleasure," I replied; "and I hope you will let me have the benefit of your opinion in return. Perhaps the best way will be for me to hand you the reports of our discussions. The proposition was made at a recent meeting of the association of which I am a member."

Thereupon I went upstairs, obtained the reports, and, returning to the sitting-room, handed them to Mr. Winslow. In about an hour and a half he came to my room. "I am sorry to say," he began, "that I have not been able to finish reading these papers, and as I leave the city early in the morning I return them now with thanks. I have read to the end of the discussions on 'Competition and Collectivism,' and I have found the matter very interesting and instructive. I shall be glad of an opportunity to continue the reading on my return to the city in a few weeks."

Observing from his manner that he had some further opinions to express, I invited him to be seated, and,

after a moment's hesitation, ventured the question, "Of what practical value do you think such discussions are?"

"Of great practical value," he replied. "They are educators of a high order." He paused, apparently expecting some comment; but, finding that I made none, he continued, "To what conclusions did the discussions lead?"

"None," I replied; but, hastily correcting myself, I added, "The church,—the new church."

Mr. Winslow was silent for a time, as if absorbed in thought. Then he observed, "I should judge from what I have read that this subject by no means deserved the thoughtless treatment it received at the supper table. I can give no opinion on the proposed church, because I have not yet read to that point in your discussions. But what I have read leads me to think the conclusions deserved at least a respectful consideration."

Stung by the justice of the remark, I said: "You are right. I deserve the rebuke, and I thank you for it."

"That is a frank admission," he replied, smiling. "Let me venture another observation that may not be inappropriate. You, like many other sectarian believers, seem to think that in brushing aside what appear to you antagonistic opinions you win a victory for God, and are therefore entitled to His favour and to the applause of men. But if the matter brushed aside be of real merit, then you deserve neither the approval of God nor men's applause."

"An improvement in belief," he continued, "may be of the greatest benefit to mankind; and as for God, all our days on earth were given us to study Him. This is one of the most important and most solemn duties of life. Besides, the man who lives such a life,

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and makes this his chief study, will have passed his days on earth in full accord with God's design. Simply to believe, without knowing the reason for belief, is not the attribute of nobleness or high-mindedness; it is the characteristic of a boorish mind. To inquire, to study, to strive, to climb upward, constitute the noble task given to those who, although men, are yet God-like in act." Mr. Winslow arose, held out his hand and bade me good-night. I thanked him heartily for his advice, and, when he was gone, sat down and began to think.

"Simply to believe, without knowing the reason for belief, is not the attribute of nobleness or high-mindedness; it is the characteristic of a boorish mind." Was this man right? "To inquire, to study, to strive, to climb upward, constitute the task given to those who, although men, are yet God-like in act." Was he right? The question repeated itself, and took a firm hold on my mind. "Yes," came the answer; "he is right and I am wrong." Having come to this conclusion, I determined to make as thorough an investigation of the subject as was possible for me.

Following out this conclusion, I devoted almost all my spare time to earnest study. I began by questioning the system under which we live. Have we achieved the best possible results? And the answer came promptly, "No." Far from having achieved the best possible results, we shall, it is more likely, find that our principal period of achievement in higher development lies before us.

Here was this world, supplied with resources and forces which, if properly utilised, would bring abundance and a just measure of happiness to all. Going to my window, I looked out into the street, and it required

no keen effort of imagination on my part to picture the human quagmire that surrounded me. Alas, I knew only too well the miles and miles of tenements, as we know them who live in them. We, who pass the greater part of our lives in the tenement house, require no Dickens to describe them. The misery of the hundreds of thousands of poorly fed, poorly clothed and poorly housed inmates we well know. Their stunted, enfeebled minds stamp them patently "menial" and "servile"—so patently that even he who runs may read. Beyond this vast poverty-stricken host are to be found the grand avenues and the boulevards of the comparatively few, the fortunate, the rich. And these fortunates—did they concern themselves with plans, with methods, for the amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate tenement-house dwellers? Did they strive toward bettering the conditions of the poor?

Alas, no! The rich use the poor as a tool, as a means, as a ladder, as servants in the factories and as lackeys in their houses, with but one thought uppermost, and that thought the scientific exploitation of these very poor. How best to subjugate, how best to enervate, how best to humiliate and how best to keep subservient this mass, seems to be the main thought that actuates the wealthy.

And as for the poor, do they strive to escape from this servility, this barbarism? No; for their rusty, clogged and stunted minds permit them no volition other than to follow the path laid down for them by their leaders, the rich. It seemed to me that at the end of the march of all these historic centuries mankind was still living in the age of cannibalism; for the chief thought of one and all seemed to be how best to possess and devour one another.

And this devouring force — does it not actuate and permeate the entire social structure? Surely. But is there not room, is there not need, for a counteracting force in an opposite direction, in the direction of up-building, uplifting and civilising? What other force is more available, more suited to the purpose than religion? Does religion now perform this function? And I was compelled to answer, “No.” I was reluctant to come to this conclusion, because of my reverence for religion; but I was compelled to do so simply because the conclusion is a fact.

What should be a compact, united, powerful force toward general amelioration, is in reality a motley heterogeneous conglomeration of quarrelsome sects, each eager, above all things, to increase its revenues. And as these revenues come, in the main, from the poor, it follows that the poor pay for their own enslavement.

To pay for lubricants to oil the machinery designed to send millions of starved and stunted souls to Heaven does not seem to me to be nearly as profitable as to pay toward creating a force which would ameliorate conditions on earth. Right living on earth would soon bring with it right thinking, and right thinking would surely send many more, and nobler, souls to Heaven than is now possible.

Such were my conclusions, and this time after most earnest and careful study.





CHAPTER LI

THE SURVIVAL OF POLYTHEISM

Mr. Moore (continuing).—At the expiration of a few weeks Mr. Winslow returned, and at once asked me to lend him again the reports of our meetings. This I did, at the same time requesting him to give me his opinion on them when he had read them through. He acceded readily to my request, and took the reports. After keeping them for five days, he called early in the evening at my room and deposited the papers on the table.

“Well, Mr. Winslow,” I said, “what is your opinion?”

Seating himself in the chair which I offered, he began: “My opinion is that now, at the approach of the twentieth century, is a most opportune time for the promulgation of the proposition these papers contain. I believe in the proposition; in fact, it is impossible for the unbiassed mind to do otherwise. It cannot be undermined or overthrown by any human reason.”

“I have about come to your conclusion,” I observed; “but there is a stumbling-block in the way.”

“What is it?”

“Does not acceptance of this idea involve a denial of the divinity of Christ?”

“ In what way ? ”

“ I hardly know how to express myself,” I replied, “ but I will try my best. I do not see what room there is for Christ in a system like that outlined in the papers before you. The system seems a most practicable one in so far as its operation will largely tend to ameliorate material conditions ; that I agree to. But it seems to me it must tend to weaken spiritual belief to a great degree.”

“ How ? ” asked Mr. Winslow.

“ In that it will leave no room for Christ as co-ruler with God the Father.”

“ Oh, I see,” he remarked. “ You evidently conceive the Ruler of the Universe as a personality with three heads and one body, very nearly as the painters in the early history of Christianity painted Him. Excuse me for a moment. I have a book in my room from which I should like to read you a few paragraphs.”

He left the room and quickly returned. “ Here is a book,” he said, “ by Andrew Dickson White, formerly president of Cornell University. It is called *The Warfare of Science with Theology*. I have turned down the pages to indicate the passages to which I want to call your attention.”

I took the book and read :

“ The Creator was sometimes represented with a single body, but with three faces, thus showing that Christian belief had in some pious minds gone through substantially the same cycle which an earlier form of belief had made ages before in India, when the Supreme Being was represented with one body but with the three faces of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.”

“ Do you perceive the light thrown on your objection by the passage you have just read ? ” asked Mr. Winslow.

"I fail to perceive it."

"Then read on at the next place."

I read as follows :

"Among those masses of cathedral sculpture which preserve so much of mediæval theology, one frequently recurring group is noteworthy for its presentment of a time-honoured doctrine regarding the origin of the universe.

"The Almighty, in human form, sits benignly, making the sun, moon and stars, and hanging them from the solid firmament which supports the 'Heaven above' and overarches the 'earth beneath.'

"The furrows of thought on the Creator's brow show that in this work He is obliged to contrive ; the knotted muscles upon His arms show that He is obliged to toil ; naturally, then, the sculptors and painters of the mediæval and early modern period frequently represented Him as the writers whose conceptions they embodied had done,—as, on the seventh day, weary after thought and toil, enjoying well-earned repose and the plaudits of the hosts of Heaven.

"In these thought-fossils of the cathedrals, and in other revelations of the same idea through sculpture, painting, glass-staining, mosaic work, and engraving, during the Middle Ages and the two centuries following, culminated a belief which had been developed through thousands of years, and which has determined the world's thought until our own time."

"Do you still fail to see the connection?" asked Mr. Winslow.

"I do."

"Do you not see," pursued Mr. Winslow, "that such a belief is polytheism, and not monotheism? Do you not remember that the Bible tells us that when Christ came on earth He came as spirit, and became incarnate; or, as is said, 'the word became flesh'? Have you not also heard that in the transfiguration the spirit again returned whence it came?"

“ Your mental picture of the form of Christ, your conception of Him with human lineaments, is no doubt due to the impression you have received from pictures of the Ascension. Such images, you surely know, are idolatrous and polytheistic.

“ The trouble seems to be that you, in common with almost all Christians, find it exceedingly difficult to become a real believer in monotheism. Our ancestors, at the time of their conversion to Christianity, appeared to have entirely abandoned polytheism for monotheism; but in reality there was but an imperfect conversion. To all intents and purposes the polytheism was still there; modified, perhaps, but there it was, and to a great extent it still survives in the offspring of the converts.

“ What untold mischiefs may not be traced to the survival and persistence of this phase of idolatry! To this evil may be attributed the division of the Christian Church and its bitter and violent contentions and dissensions. It is this idolatrous phase in Christianity which renders it impotent as an ameliorating force in human society. It is this idolatrous phase which places religion in the background,—which, with tentacles of greed, fraud and hypocrisy, clings to progress, and thus retards civilisation. It is this phase which forces science to usurp that place of high honour which of right ought to belong to religion. Remove from religion this idolatrous phase, and you remove the block and hindrance to amelioration, to progress and to civilisation.

“ Does God ask us to spend our days on earth in fruitless efforts to guess what His form is? Does He not prohibit this very thing, by commanding that we make no form or image of Him? And does not this

command imply that we should refrain from making a mental image of Him as well ? ”

“ Your words seem to be well said,” I observed. “ I am almost persuaded to believe that you are right.”

Mr. Winslow continued: “ God has again and again told us, in the Bible, that what He required of us was not that we should spend our days on earth in the vain occupation of guessing at His form, but that we should each of us love his neighbour as himself. Twisting this plain command to suit our primitive fancies, we do just the opposite. We spend most of our precious time in exploiting our neighbour, and in guessing what form God has. In this, we are guilty of deep and deadly sin ; sin which causes unfathomed misery ; sin which divides and antagonises and embitters ; sin which renders this earth a Sodom and a Gomorrah when it might otherwise be a Paradise. It is this deadly sin which is the chief cause of error and confusion. It is this abomination which makes wrong seem right, and right seem wrong, which constantly breeds selfishness, deception and cruelty ; until, in the end, the blurring and distorting vision beholds as normal and orderly that which is abnormal and in riotous disorder.

“ This is the idolatrous sin which breeds scepticism, hypocrisy, atheism and pessimism, and this sin it is which renders religion a sport and a plaything to be buffeted and kicked about by everyone that chooses.

“ I see,” pursued Mr. Winslow, “ that you have here a copy of Herbert Spencer’s *First Principles*. Permit me to read you what he has to say on this subject.”

I handed him the book, and he read :

“ The consciousness of an Inscrutable Power manifested to us through all phenomena, has been growing ever clearer ; and must eventually be freed from its imperfections. The certainty

that on the one hand such a Power exists, while on the other hand its nature transcends intuition and is beyond imagination, is the certainty towards which intelligence has from the first been progressing. . . .

"Have we not seen how utterly incompetent our minds are to form even an approach to a conception of that which underlies all phenomena? Is it not proved that this incompetency is the incompetency of the Conditioned to grasp the Unconditioned? Does it not follow that the Ultimate Cause cannot in any respect be conceived by us because it is in every respect greater than can be conceived? And may we not, therefore, rightly refrain from assigning to it any attributes whatever, on the ground that such attributes, derived as they must be from our own natures, are not elevations but degradations? . . . Religion has ever been more or less irreligious; and it continues to be partially irreligious even now. In the first place, as implied above, it has all along professed to have some knowledge of that which transcends knowledge; and has so contradicted its own teachings. While with one breath it has asserted that the Cause of all things passes understanding, it has, with the next breath, asserted that the Cause of all things possesses such or such attributes—can be in so far understood.

"In the second place, while in great part sincere in its fealty to the great truth it has had to uphold, it has often been insincere, and consequently irreligious, in maintaining the untenable doctrines by which it has obscured this great truth. . . .

"How truly its central position is impregnable, Religion has never adequately realised. . . .

"Obliged to abandon one by one the superstitions it once tenaciously held, and daily finding its cherished beliefs more and more shaken, Religion shows a secret fear that all things may some day be explained. . . .

"The truly religious element of Religion has always been good; that which has proved untenable in doctrine and vicious in practice, has been its irreligious element."

Mr. Winslow laid down the book. "It is the irreligious element in religion," he said, "which is responsible for much of the crime and poverty and misery

that surround us; and any and all efforts at reform that do not include the radical abolition of the irreligious element in religion must prove valueless and futile."

"Do you really believe, then," I asked, "that the scheme proposed in our debates opens a path of relief?"

"Most surely," he replied; "for it will begin, right from the very start, to replace error by truth. It will transform wrong thinking into right thinking, and this will in turn transform wrong doing into right doing. Men receive the treatment their intellectual strength deserves; a physically strong man who is intellectually weak is the best possible material for servitude. Develop this same man's intellect, and you emancipate him. Nothing whatever is better adapted to emancipate the masses from mental and physical slavery than is the plan proposed."

"Do you think the people will readily accept this new idea?" I inquired.

"The idea is not at all new," he answered; "on the contrary, it is very old, older than Christianity or Judaism. It is aptly illustrated by these lines from Pope":

"Father of all! in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

"To thee, whose temple is all space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies!
One chorus let all Being raise!
All Nature's incense rise!"

"Such," continued Mr. Winslow, "has been, and is, the belief of many among the most intelligent people of the world. As for its general acceptance, that can only

be accomplished as the result of much effort. It may be hundreds or thousands of years before the idea is generally accepted, but accepted it will be some day."

"Is it not possible that some other mode of reform may present itself, capable of accomplishing the same results, and easier of adoption?" I asked.

"No other reform can be a substitute for this one; for whenever the primary idea of the mass of the people is grounded in error, it must follow that all their other ideas are likewise tinged with error. All other proposed reforms are, therefore, simply palliatives and valueless; for before the world can be expected to act justly, it must first learn to think intelligently."

"If the difficulties are so great in the way of the general acceptance of this idea," I observed, "who could be found willing to undertake its promulgation?"

"It would seem to me," he replied, "that the proper persons to begin this work are those who suffer most under the present system."

"But," I said, "they are too poor to do so; they have not the means to build a church involving the vast outlay which the carrying out of the plan requires."

"There is no more necessity for a grand and costly church at the start, in order to carry out this idea," said Mr. Winslow, "than there was for a St. Peter's Church or a St. Paul's Cathedral in the early days of Christianity. This church can be started in a room, in a hall, anywhere; and the only paraphernalia that you require are a pitcher of water, a clod of earth and a growing plant for your altar."

Our conversation at this point turned to other subjects, and soon Mr. Winslow arose and took his leave.

It is now scarcely necessary for me to tell you that my former opinions have undergone a complete change.

I am now a firm believer in the proposed Church Universal.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to address myself particularly to my esteemed friend, Mr. Valanti. He has made an able and powerful plea for the Roman Catholic Church. Were I inclined to do so, I could prove beyond the possibility of a doubt that he has told but one part of the story. He has magnified the virtues of the Romish Church ; he has, however, obscured and ignored her enormous failings. But I do not deem it necessary or proper at this time to continue any antagonism. We are offered, in the proposed plan, a solution of the problem confronting us. In accepting it, we no longer find any necessity for antagonism and contention.

Most of us present have already accepted this plan, and it now becomes the duty and privilege of the converted to exert their most earnest endeavour to cause the conversion of our respected friend, so that he may be still further promoted in our love by becoming our brother in faith.

And thus, in closing, I reach out the hand of fellowship and brotherhood to our fellow-inquirer. Let us all hope and pray that he may accept it in the spirit in which it is offered, and that thus the cause that has divided us may be forever dissipated.





CHAPTER LII

THE NEW FAITH

Ezra.—Before proceeding with a review of what has been said, I first of all desire to extend the hand of fellowship to my brethren in the New Faith—the Faith to which they and I have now publicly given our assent.

In using the words “New Faith,” we should understand them in the sense that the Faith is new to us. The Faith in which we have now declared ourselves believers is in reality very old; as old as that primal soul harnessed to human body, which, reaching upward in true accord with its spiritual nature, sought its spiritual prototype and found God. Thus, finding God, man likewise found a brother, for every man became to him a brother, and God became the All-Father. It was thus and then that our Faith was born, and it is older than writing or hieroglyphic inscriptions. Such, then, is the great antiquity of our new Faith.

And now I deem it proper to reach out the hand of brotherhood to all such as have openly confessed The Faith.

Messrs. Bradley, Fisher, Quail and Moore went over to Ezra, and shook hands with him and embraced him.

Quail.—I suggest that we permit others in this room, who have not yet spoken, to declare themselves on this matter, if they feel so inclined.

The suggestion was unanimously assented to, and Ezra put the question.

Mr. Morton.—Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: I regret that I am unable to deliver a public address. Were it in my power, I would willingly express to you my feelings on this occasion. This much, however, is in such bold relief in my mind that I shall find no difficulty in stating it ; nor indeed could I withhold it without doing violence to my conscience.

I therefore say to you all that I, now and for all time hereafter, declare myself a firm believer in the New Faith: the very same Faith that has been declared and assented to this evening. I feel it a solemn duty, an honour and a pleasure, to offer you my hand in token of brotherhood, and I ask that you accept me as a co-believer. In making this request and this declaration, I would not have you think that the conclusion which prompts my words has been arrived at by me or my wife—and I say this at her request—on the spur of the moment ; we have gone over the subject with great care, and our conclusions are final. I may say that, for several years past, long before I attended these meetings, this very faith was hovering in my mind. That it presented itself to me in an undefined, vague form, is true. Your debates and my subsequent inquiries have but tended to bring out more clearly the faith which was in me. And now having, as I think, so stated the matter as not to be misunderstood, I ask that you receive me as a brother in faith. As for my wife, she has signified a wish to speak to you on this matter herself.

Mr. Morton, at the conclusion of his remarks, walked toward the centre of the room, where he was met by all the other converts, who, one by one, cordially received his extended hand.

Mrs. Morton then arose and said, "Mr. President, before I express my own conclusion, I desire to ask a sign of your sincerity."

Ezra.—What is the sign?

Mrs. Morton.—Miss Selner, are you a convert?

Miss Selner.—I am.

Mrs. Morton.—Mr. Fisher has already declared himself a convert. Do you now understand, Mr. President, the sign which I desire?

Ezra.—I do; and right gladly do I now grant it.

Ezra thereupon advanced and took his sister's hand. Then, addressing Mr. Fisher, he said, "My brother, there is no longer any dividing line or barrier between us."

Mr. Fisher quickly arose and joyfully held out his hands. And Ezra placed the right hand of his sister in the right hand of Mr. Fisher, who, turning toward the assembly, said, "Friends, be witnesses to our betrothal."

Mrs. Morton went forward and kissed Miss Selner; and then, turning to Ezra, she said: "I owe to my dear husband, and to you, and to all in this room, the supreme pleasure I experience to-night in declaring my complete conversion to the New Faith; a faith which I feel will bring me not only nearer to God, but closer to humanity. I now reach out to you the hand of sisterhood, and ask you to receive and accept me as a sincere convert."

All the believers thereupon arose and cordially shook hands with Mrs. Morton.

Ezra.—As we are now converts to the Faith, the true Faith, it becomes our solemn duty to promulgate this Faith to the full extent of our power.

On this head we can speak further when the occasion shall permit. At this time, I deem it my duty to continue with the review. In doing so, I crave your indulgence, and beg you will overlook any irregularity in the order of my remarks. The deep and heartfelt emotions which stir me as the result of the revelation this evening so master me that I am unable to segregate my thoughts as I could wish. I will, therefore, permit my utterances to come somewhat spontaneously and ask your prayers that what I say may be acceptable to God and to you.

Before beginning the review proper, I wish to submit some observations on the future social functions of the new church. These relate to suggestions of practical work by the people, to the end that conditions may be ameliorated.

As the special occasion of this meeting will not permit any extended argument on this head, I will say briefly that my observations relate to the appointment of committees, for the purposes mentioned, as follows :

First : The people in each community shall be divided into certain divisions for social duty.

Second : The division shall elect those who are to serve on committees.

Third : There shall be minor and major committees.

Fourth : The minor committees shall report to the major committees.

Fifth : The principal reports of the committees are to be published in the daily papers.

Sixth : There shall be the following committees :

A. On Factory Labour.

- B. On Farm Labour.
- C. On Sailors.
- D. On Labour employed on Land Transportation.
- E. On Labour employed on Coast and Inland Water Transportation.
- F. On Labour employed by the Government.
- G. On Labour employed by Merchants.
- H. On Servants.
- I. On Miners.
- J. On Miscellaneous Labour.
- K. On the Franchise.
- L. On Public Amusements and Recreations.
- M. On Municipal Law-makers.
- N. On National and State Law-makers.
- O. On Executives.
- P. On Newspapers and Publications.
- Q. On Public and Private Education.
- R. On Dwellings.
- S. On Pure Food.
- T. On Adulterations.
- U. On the Judiciary.
- V. On Public and Private Charities.
- W. On Parks and Roads.
- X. On Public and Private Sanitation.
- Y. On Corporations.
- Z. On Reformatories and Penal Institutions.

I fully realise that a proposition for the subdivision of the people into committees for the purpose of criticising the various interests outlined would meet with but scant courtesy in our day. The time will, however, surely come when such committees shall perform these very functions. Not in a perfunctory manner, or for hire, but as a religious duty, and in the service of God.

In my opening remarks I alluded to our New Faith

as one of great antiquity. I now wish to direct your attention to a few quotations which I have jotted down, showing that this Faith was seemingly understood by men of various nations.

James Freeman Clarke, in his *Ten Great Religions*, page 52, says, concerning the belief promulgated in ancient China :

“There is one highest, ultimate principle of all existence,—the Tae-keih, or Grand Extreme. This is absolutely immaterial, and the basis of the order of the Universe. From this ultimate principle, operating from all eternity, come all animate and inanimate nature.”

Tacitus, in speaking on the “Manners of the Germans,” says :

“They conceive it unworthy the grandeur of celestial beings to confine their deities within walls, or to represent them under a human similitude: woods and groves are their temples; and they affix names of divinity to that secret power, which they behold with the eye of adoration alone.”

The *Ten Great Religions*, page 101, in considering the Brahmins, from “The First Book on Creation,” speaks of God thus :

“He, whom the mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists from eternity.”

The Avesta says of God :

“Who always was, always is, and always will be.”

Page 239 of the *Ten Great Religions*, on “The Gods of Egypt” :

“The interior, hidden theology is supposed to have related to the unity and spirituality of the Deity.”

On page 313 of the same book the Grecian poet speaks of God in the following lines :

“He is one, self-proceeding ; and from Him alone all things proceed, and in them He himself exerts His activity ; no mortal beholds Him, but He beholds all.”

In the chapter “ On Providence.” Epictetus says :

“You take a journey to Olympia to see the work of Phidias, and all of you think it a misfortune to die without having seen such things. But when there is no need to take a journey, and where a man is, there he has the works of God before him, will you not desire to see and understand them?”

There existed, indeed, a true conception of God in remote antiquity, and, as we have seen, among various peoples and races. Unfortunately, however, this knowledge belonged only to the very few, and those among the most learned.

Why should not this knowledge become the common property of all mankind? That it is not yet such is evident from the instructive illustration furnished by the experiment of Brother Bradley : “ Papa, you told us last night there would be something in this room to-day that would answer questions.” How many millions, not merely children like Walter, but grown-up children, men and women, are there who likewise fail to see the thousands of things that answer questions,—who desire to go to Olympia to see the statue which Phidias carved, but who fail to see everywhere, and all around them, the works of God !

Epictetus also says :

“If God had made colours, but had not made the faculty of seeing them, what would have been their use? None at all. On the other hand, if He had made the faculty of vision, but

had not made objects such as fall under the faculty, what in that case also would have been the use of it? None at all. Well, suppose that He had made both, but had not made light? In that case, also, they would have been of no use."

And since God made colours, the faculty of vision, objects and light, has He not done this that we may learn, through these things, to apprehend Him? Of what use are these things to us if we fail to employ them for spiritual development? Does not their highest use involve the apprehension of their spiritual significance? How beautifully apt, then, is the closing sentence of Brother Fisher: "Like a kind and loving Father, God has placed us in His great Kindergarten to learn the lessons His wisdom deems good for us to know"!

Froebel, indeed, builded better than he knew, for not only is the principle he taught applicable to young children, but it is as applicable to grown-up children, to men and women of all ages, and chiefly so in the domain of religious education.

How many hundreds of thousands of hypocrites, atheists and pessimists do not the predominant churches produce who, under a more rational system of religious education would learn to believe in God! Is it possible for a hypocrite to love his neighbour as himself? Can anyone love his neighbour so long as he is at heart an unbeliever in God? "But," it is said, "atheists are unbelievers, and some of them are very noble people." True; but there is this difference: a man may be an atheist and an honest man at the same time; but it is impossible for a man to be a hypocrite and an honest man at the same time.

Great, indeed, must be the suffering of a spiritual being who earnestly seeks for spiritual light and cannot find it!

Mohammed says of such :

“As darkness over a deep sea, billows riding on billows, billows below and clouds above,—one darkness on another darkness,—so that if a man stretches out his hand he cannot behold it, thus is he to whom the light of God doth not come.”

For such there is but one avenue of escape ; they must continue the search, and in the end they may, like Brother Fisher, find the Light.

Brother Quail, in his opening remarks, gives us his views on the utility of rational debate. An evidence of its utility is manifest in the results of our own discussions. It may not be generally known that Judaism, Christianity and Grecian philosophy are largely the product of debate. Even down to our own day, a large number of Jews throughout the world assemble regularly to debate on the Scriptures and on Scripture commentary.

Another interesting feature in Brother Quail's remarks is the criticism of the professor on Uncle George and Aunt Dinah. The professor implies that Uncle George and Aunt Dinah are in reality better and nobler than their creeds. This is likewise true of many thousands of other believers in the predominant faiths. How sad is that condition which makes the person nobler and grander than his highest ideal !

In the diagnosis by Brother Moore we are furnished, as by a flash-light, a glimpse of the source of contagion which contaminates the predominant religions with the virus of idolatry. The chief cause of the evils which afflict humanity can be unerringly traced to the belief in anthropomorphic attributes of God and to belief in religious dogmas which are inconsistent with and contrary to universal law. Those things which are

real, vital and uplifting are only to be found in the eternal principles of verity inherent in law universal.

It is the promulgation of these principles of verity by Christianity which has given it the grace, the power and the spirit to conquer the ancient forms of idolatry. But, unfortunately, in addition to teaching these eternal principles, it likewise taught and imperiously demanded belief in dogmas which are contrary to the law universal, and in anthropomorphic attributes of God; and such teachings and beliefs have largely tended to neutralise the good which the promulgation of the principles of eternal verity might have brought about.

May we hold Jesus responsible for this reactionary element in Christianity? I think not. I do not think that He taught the current dogmas which are put forth in His name by the predominant churches. Renan, in his *Life of Jesus*, page 364, says :

“Jesus is not a founder of dogmas, a maker of symbols; He is the world’s initiator into a new spirit.”

In Mark xii., 29, 30 and 31, we are told that Jesus taught there is but one God, and that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. Christianity, in so far as it taught these eternal principles of verity inherent in law universal, deserves the highest praise; but it deserves the severest condemnation for likewise teaching that which is not verity nor conformable to law universal.

Heaven is not open for exploitation by rabbi, priest or minister, no matter how learned or pious he may be. Heaven is within the domain of the Infinite, and God the Infinite never revealed the secrets of Infinity to mortal beings. No, not through Abraham, nor through Moses, nor through Jesus. God has, indeed, revealed

Himself to us, but only and at all times through the law of the relative, through phenomena, through His manifestations.

Let me read to you what Maimonides says on this head in his *Guide of the Perplexed*, page 191:

“Moses asked two things of God, and received a reply respecting both. The one thing he asked was, that God should let him know His true essence ; the other, that God should let him know His attributes. In answer to both these petitions God promised that He would let him know all His attributes, and that these were nothing but His actions. He also told him that His true essence could not be perceived.”

And Immanuel Kant teaches the very same doctrine, as will be seen from some of the deductions which I will quote from his *Metaphysic of Ethics* :

“It is the practical faculties alone which can help us beyond the sensible world, and procure us a knowledge of a supersensible order and combination of things.

“Such ends are one’s own perfection,—our neighbour’s happiness.

“Duty is the necessity of an act, out of reverence felt for law.

“Act from a maxim at all times fit for law universal.”

Whence, then, came this desire for the exploitation of Heaven? It came direct from heathenism, paganism and idolatry.

The national pagan religions were wont to claim god incarnations for their victorious military chieftains during their lifetime, and deified them after death. So grossly wanton and shameless had this barbarous notion become in its degeneracy that during a period before and after the birth of Christ the Roman emperors were, in their lifetimes, worshipped by the people as gods.

In Milman's Gibbon's *Rome*, pages 85 and 509, we find :

"A regular custom was introduced, that, on the decease of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the senate by a solemn decree should place him in the number of the gods : and the ceremonies of his apotheosis were blended with those of his funeral. . . .

"We should disgrace the virtues of the Antonines by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. . . .

"The mad attempt of Caligula to place his own statue in the temple of Jerusalem was defeated by the unanimous resolution of a people who dreaded death much less than such an idolatrous profanation."

How many sad and bitter calamities did not the Jews suffer because they refused to worship these emperors !

In Maclaine's Moshien's *Ecclesiastical History*, page 17, we find the following in relation to paganism :

"The deities of almost all nations were either ancient heroes, renowned for noble exploits and beneficent deeds, or kings and generals who had founded empires, or women rendered illustrious by remarkable actions or useful inventions. . . .

"These deities were honoured with rites and sacrifices of various kinds, according to their respective nature and offices. The rites used in their worship were absurd and ridiculous, and frequently cruel and obscene. Most nations offered animals, and some proceeded to the enormity of human sacrifices. . . .

"Pontiffs, priests, and ministers, distributed into several classes, presided in this strange worship, and were appointed to prevent disorder in the performance of the sacred rites ; but, pretending to be distinguished by an immediate intercourse and friendship with the gods, they abused their authority in the basest manner, to deceive an ignorant and wretched people."

On page 18 of the same book we read :

"Such as were not sunk in an unaccountable and brutish stupidity, perceived the deformity of these religious systems.

To these, the crafty priests addressed two considerations, to prevent their incredulity, and to dispel their doubts. The first was drawn from the miracles and prodigies which they pretended were daily wrought in the temples, before the statues of the gods and heroes that were placed there; and the second was deduced from oracles and divination, by which they maintained that the secrets of futurity were unfolded through the interposition of the gods. In both these points the cunning of the priests imposed miserably upon the ignorance of the people; and, if the discerning few saw the cheat, they were obliged, from a regard to their own safety, to laugh with caution, since the priests were ever ready to accuse, before a raging and superstitious multitude, those who discovered their religious frauds as rebels against the majesty of the immortal gods."

All this indicates with sufficient clearness the origin of the idolatrous taint which influenced and vitiated Christianity,—a taint which may only be eliminated with great difficulty. On this head, permit me to quote briefly from *The Doctrine of Religion*, by Fichte. I will read from pages 405, 406 and 407 :

"Religion does not consist in that wherein it is placed by the common mode of thought,—namely in this : that man should believe, be of opinion, and rest satisfied, because no one has the hardihood to assert the opposite,—his belief resting wholly on hearsay and outward assurance,—that there is a God :—this is a vulgar superstition by which, at most, a defective police system may be remedied, while the inward nature of man remains as bad as before, and indeed frequently is made worse, since he forms this God after his own image, and in him only manufactures a new prop for his own corruption. But herein Religion does consist, that man in his own person and not in that of another, with his own spiritual eye and not through that of another, should immediately behold, have, and possess God. . . .

"It is clear, therefore, that every one who does not wish to return to the ancient times of Heathendom must admit not only the possibility, but the irremissible duty, of communicating to

men the profoundest principles of knowledge in a generally comprehensible form. . . .

“That which follows most decisively from all these considerations is the duty incumbent upon every man who is penetrated by this higher knowledge to exert all his powers to communicate that knowledge, wherever possible, to the whole brotherhood of humanity ; presenting it to each individual in that form in which he is most open to its reception.”

There was a time in the history of civilisation when scholars and right-seeing men began to appear, and to cry out against the idolatrous phases in Christianity.

But Milton and Dante came, and with soothing idolatrous poetic music lulled the teachers into a sleep from which they have not yet awakened. And as mice are emboldened to come forth when the vigilant eye of the cat is closed in slumber, so do mischievous rabbis, priests and ministers come forth and relate idolatrous tales of doings in Heaven — tales for which the only warrant lies in similar tales by similar men who lived in times even more cruel and selfish than the present.

Heredity and environment, indeed, make these tales acceptable to the people ; nor can they now be easily turned from their course, for it seems to them both pleasing and natural. Nevertheless, there is not a force of evil in all the world that is more to be dreaded than this seemingly harmless and edifying Heaven-speculation.

Jesus was, indeed, a Messiah, a Saviour, a revered teacher, a regenerator ; but He taught what ? What but how we should live on earth, not that we should speculate as to what is going on in Heaven ? So long as Heaven-speculators are permitted to occupy the pulpit in synagogue, church or mosque, so long will there follow as a direct outcome many and grievous evils.

These Heaven-speculators plough the heavenly field

with the plough of idolatry, they harrow it with the harrow of impudent audacity, and they seed it with arrogant assumption. And mark the crops that are harvested! Fools in plenty, hypocrites abundant, haters and separators in rank luxuriance ; beside these are the sceptics, the atheists, the pessimists, all in goodly number ; and, in a remote corner, the few, the very few, good souls — and even they hardly stand the test that Heaven demands for acceptance. It is this Heaven-mongering, this Heaven-speculating, this creed and dogma postulating, which is directly responsible for the spirit of bigotry, intolerance, hatred and cruelty. Such things were not taught by Jesus ; therefore, Jesus could never have taught what these false teachers do. Jesus taught simple monotheism ; but these false teachers teach polytheism, paganism, heathenism, idolatry. And idolatry is but another name for error, selfishness and cruelty.

And now, I wish to make a few observations on the conclusions of our honoured friend, Valanti. He asks us to forsake the several conclusions we have arrived at, and to join the Roman Catholic Church. There was a time in the history of the world when such an appeal would have carried with it reason and utility. At that time, Roman Catholicism was a great bright fire in a world of dense darkness. Roman Catholicism was then a factor, a worker, an arbiter, a doer. Her light, however, was not permitted to throw radiance on progress. She limited her function to the destruction of the old order, but she strenuously prevented the up-building of the new. In doing this, she committed an unpardonable offence against the law of development. Tried and convicted by this very law, she has been sentenced : sentenced to slow and sure stagnation. Her former position of pre-eminence is now gone. She

has been relegated to the rear, and her days are numbered.

Does this church still feel within her once arrogant breast a desire, a hope, to rule? Then, in the name of that law which she has so grossly offended, in the name of the law of development, let her cast off the grappling irons of reactionary intrigue by which she still clings to the rear of progress. Let her cease to offend against the law of development. Let her gather all her mental, moral, spiritual and social mediævalisms together, and let her then, with all her remaining strength, hurl this mass into the ocean of oblivion. Then let her advance to the very front and, seizing her place there, let her help pull the car of progress upward toward the summit of development. Scarce shall the Roman Catholic Church have done all this, when she will again be crowned Chief Ruler among the nations, and her rule will be grander, nobler and mightier than ever before.

And now, my dearly beloved friends, take heart and courage. We are but few, and our power seems insignificant; but there is One who, if He is on our side, is mightier than all earthly rulers and all earthly power.

Fear not, but speak those things that come from your hearts; and God, knowing the heart, shall prosper your work. I will close by repeating the noble words of Pope :

“Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through nature up to nature’s God; . . .
Pursues that chain which links th’ immense design,
Joins heaven and earth, and mortal and divine;
Sees that no being any bliss can know,
But touches some above, and some below : . . .
And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,

All end, in love of God and love of man.
For him alone, Hope leads from goal to goal,
And opens still, and opens on his soul. . . .
Grasp the whole world of reason, life, and sense,
In one close system of benevolence. . . .
Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in, of every kind ;
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty bless'd,
And heaven beholds its image in his breast."

Mr. Moore.—My friends, before we adjourn I wish, with your permission, to say a few words to our honoured fellow-inquirer, Mr. Valanti.

That he has not yet become a convert to our Faith is true; but it is nevertheless highly probable that he has not been altogether uninfluenced by these debates. It may, after all, be possible that, with more reflection on the subject, our friend will in the end see this matter in the light in which it appears to us.

The mind, like matter, cannot cease its motion in a given direction until the impelling force ceases to exert its influence in that direction. And even when this influence has ceased, there is still some motion caused by the momentum originally imparted. I can well understand that, had there been no Reformation, no Protestantism, it would most likely have been as difficult for us to consider favourably the faith we have adopted as it seems to be for our friend Valanti. Protestantism seems, therefore, to be a stepping-stone toward the higher faith.

The opinions of our friend concerning his church seem to be derived from a limited and confined field of vision. Like Cardinal Richelieu in the play, he seems to mark a circle around himself, calling it the Roman Catholic Church. He then concludes that all within

that circle is good, and all without is bad. Thus does he venerate with filial affection a thing of his own creation. Yet, if God be not in that circle, and if the soul of that church be not sustained by and grounded on universal law, then is he performing nothing less than an act of idolatry.

Is the Romish Church grounded on universal law, and is the absolute, infinite God within its circumference? If we were to judge by the opinions of the free and enlightened of the world, we should receive an almost unanimous answer in the negative. And who is responsible for those opinions? No one but this church herself. She it was that reprobated criticism of herself; criticism which, being freely permitted in the Protestant churches, rendered those churches more progressive, and therefore better qualified as factors of progress.

While the Protestant churches zealously sought to inculcate a love for God, the Roman Catholic Church zealously sought to inculcate a love for the Church. In reprobating criticism on the one hand, and in inculcating an unquestioning love for herself on the other, the Catholic Church thereby excluded the essential element of being in harmony with the law of development; for she excluded development.

Roman Catholicism has done in religion what absolutism does in government. Both reprobate criticism, both enforce an unquestioned acquiescence in their authority, and both stimulate veneration for their institutions. And these institutions persist; but when? Only when the law of development is arrested or is forced out of existence within their territory. What purpose do these institutions serve by their persistence? What are they but reactionary forces,—forces that retard

amelioration? And if the law of development is a law universal, if it is God's law, are not such institutions contrary to universal law, are they not contrary to God?

What, then, is criticism but protestation against error and against stagnation? It serves the same purpose in social life that salt serves in the ocean. What is, therefore, more bound to invigorate an institution, whether religious or political, than criticism?

Yet more than this: An institution may be said to live at all only when it lives through free criticism. Criticism is its life, its soul, its warrant and its authority for living. And criticism involves the unhampered right of protestation.

Protestation is, therefore, a law of development, a law of God. Abraham was a protestant against the established belief of Chaldea.

Moses was a protestant against the belief of Egypt. The Jewish nation was a protestant against idolatry. Jesus was a protestant against the formalities in the Jewish Church.

Paul was a protestant against the formalisms of the early Christian Church at Jerusalem. Roman Catholicism was a protestation against the paganism of ancient Rome. Luther protested against the evils which in his day existed in the Catholic Church; and to-night we have protested against the idolatrous phases which exist in any and all religions. Is not all this protestation in accord with the law of development, and in harmony with the will of God?

When men part with evil, do they trouble to regain it? When they gain what is good, do they not rejoice? What then have we lost in accepting this New Faith? What but idolatry and retrogression? And what have

we gained? What but the true Faith, and the path toward progress.

Have I, in accepting this, to me, new Faith, lost my Presbyterianism? Have I not, on the contrary, retained my Presbyterianism in a purified form? Nor is this all: for I have, in addition, gained all that is good in Methodism, in Episcopalianism, in Baptism, in Unitarianism, in Judaism, in Roman Catholicism, in Mohammedanism, in Brahminism, in Buddhism and in Confucianism.

And beyond and above all this, will not the cardinal feature of our New Faith teach us all how we may develop the eye, ear and mind so as to awaken the spirit within us? Will this not bring us nearer to God? Will this not bring us in closer sympathy with our fellow-man? Do you then fear, my friend, that in accepting this Faith you will lose Catholicism? Will not this Faith, on the contrary, build up Catholicism? Will it not tend to up-build it among all races, among all peoples? Will it not tend to elevate, to ameliorate and to harmonise? Come, therefore, come over to us. Come, O my friend, come and strengthen our hands! Your coming will gladden our hearts and intensify our courage. And yet, after all that has been said, if there be any prompting within you to withhold your coming at this time, I would not have your friendship for us sway you. A man should, in coming over as a convert to our Faith, be swayed by conviction of the truth and virtue of that Faith. Otherwise would he not be acceptable in the sight of God. Are you, then, now convinced?

Mr. Valanti.—My friend, almost hast thou persuaded me. But as the salvation of my soul stands in jeopardy if I decide erroneously, I will take more time for

consideration, and I pray God that He may enlighten me in this matter.

Miss Selner.—My Brother, my Sister and my Brethren, let us pray :

Praised be Thou, Gracious and Sovereign Lord.

Thou who art the source of all,

Thou who art without beginning and without end ;

Thou who knowest not Injustice,

And withholdest not Mercy.

Thou only Entity !

Thou Archetype of Beauty,

Thou true Spiritual Harmony !

All-Father,

Our Father.

Infinite Love and Loveliness,

God.

To Thee do we humbly and reverently raise our voices
in prayer.

We come to Thee for Light, for Spiritual Light,

Which shall illumine our souls.

We come to Thee for guidance, for Thy help to keep us
Steadfast in the course which Thou wouldst have us
follow.

Efface from our hearts, O God, any trace of enmity,
any cause of dissension.

Erase from our minds the dividing lines which we,
through ignorance, have placed there.

Teach us to remember that White Men, Black Men and
Yellow Men are alike Thy children.

Teach us to know that all these are our brethren and
our neighbours.

And teach us, O Gracious Father, to love our neighbours
as ourselves.

Teach us how we may learn
To know Thee through Thy Works and
Through Thy Laws, in order that we may be
Freed from all traces of idolatry.
Grant this, our prayer and our petition,
And, in Thy gracious mercy, grant this to all mankind.
Amen.





CHAPTER LIII

SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE

MY uncle, before sailing for England, had executed a power of attorney to me, under which I had acted, though hitherto only in routine matters. On the morning after the meeting reported in the last chapter, however, I received a telegram which necessitated unusual efforts on my part in his behalf.

Among my uncle's investments was an important holding of stock in a packing corporation in Chicago. In fact, he, with Stanton and Hill of that city, represented a majority of the stock and controlled the management of the corporation. The telegram informed me that complications had arisen through the manipulations of a number of stockholders; that a meeting had been called, and that unless my uncle's interests were represented there was danger that the management would be transferred into incompetent hands. Accordingly, I had no alternative but to leave at once for Chicago; and Dorothy insisted upon accompanying me, although I tried my best to dissuade her.

Once in Chicago, we found it impossible to return immediately. The stockholders' meeting took place,

and an adjournment was secured. During the interval between the two meetings I, acting in conjunction with Stanton and Hill, investigated the affairs of the corporation ; and day after day passed in which those affairs engrossed my time. Finally, the adjourned meeting was held, the various questions were settled in a way that I deemed satisfactory, and we were free to leave for home.

We reached New York early in the morning of the 13th of October, and proceeded at once to my uncle's house. There disconcerting news awaited us. A cable despatch had just been received which read as follows :

“ROME, October 11, 1899.

“Husband ill with Roman fever. Expresses strong desire to see you immediately ; cable reply.

“AUNT BARBARA.”

“What shall we do, Dorothy ?” I asked.

“Go at once,” she replied.

I hurried from the house, succeeded in securing passage for my wife and myself on a steamer that was to sail for Southampton on the following day, Saturday, October 14th, cabled my aunt to that effect, and returned home.

I found Dorothy seated at the library table. Before her lay a pile of letters, apparently unopened. She held in her hand a paper, at which she was gazing fixedly, though without seeming to read. As I entered the room, she turned toward me, and I was surprised and alarmed at her expression.

“Dorothy, what is it ?” I exclaimed.

She tried to speak, but her effort ended in a sob. So, handing me the paper which she held, she pressed

her handkerchief to her eyes and was silent. I took the paper and read :

“NEW YORK, September 29, 1899.

“MR. AND MRS. MORTON,

“My fellow-believers in the Faith : As you may have been informed, Ezra is no more with us in the flesh ; he was buried yesterday. He expressed a wish to see you both before he died, so I came up to your house, and was there told that urgent business had called you away from the city.

“Believing that you would be interested in these details, I note them down. The excitement and over-exertion at the last debate no doubt hastened the termination of his life. On reaching home he had several hemorrhages, and began sinking rapidly. The next day he asked that his sister and Mr. Fisher come to his bedside. They did so, in the presence of all the Believers. Thereupon Ezra, placing one hand on the head of his sister, and the other on the head of Mr. Fisher, as both were kneeling at the side of the bed, blessed them. He then begged the Believers to appoint Mr. Fisher as the head of the new Church. When all this had been done, he said, ‘And now I am happy.’ Seeing his sister weeping, he called her over and said, ‘You are not to weep, my beloved sister : you are to be joyful in your Faith. I need no mourners, for the God of Righteousness cannot be offended with me for that which I have said concerning His worship. And if we have not offended God, we need have no fear of death.’

“He suffered considerably, but bore it all with a cheerful countenance. He exhorted the Believers to remain steadfast to the last. Toward the end of the week he rallied somewhat, but on Monday morning he was quite low. At about seven in the evening, he motioned that all should assemble around the bed, and, when all the Believers were grouped around him, he said, ‘Receive now my last words on earth : Be steadfast for The Faith, and may you so labour that you may deserve the guidance of God and the approval of man.’

“At this time Mr. Valanti went over to the bed and, kneeling, kissed the hand of Ezra reverently, and said to him, ‘My brother, my Ezra, I am become a Believer. I now believe.’

"God be thanked for this which you have told me," said Ezra.

"Then, arousing himself, as for a last effort, he said, 'And now, my dearly beloved sister, and my dearly beloved brethren, I bid you farewell; and that we may meet again is my last prayer.'

"He sank down on the bed exhausted. He lay there quietly for a few moments; then, raising his right arm, he said, 'Steadfast!' When we went near him, we perceived his spirit had flown.

"Would that God had taken me instead! Of all those that will miss him on earth, no one will feel, can feel, his loss more than I, the black man, the negro. But he is not gone, he is in my heart; there he lives, and there he shall live so long as my will remains subject to my soul.

"And now I will close, praying to God that you are 'Steadfast,' which word we have adopted to close our prayers, before the word 'Amen.'

"With sincerity and fidelity, and in the love of God,

"Your fellow-believer,

"THOMAS QUAIL."

"He lives!" repeated Dorothy absently, as though echoing the words.

"Yes," I said: "he lives in your heart, and in mine, and in the hearts of all those who have been enlightened by his noble teaching. Ezra lives, and shall live forever. To him God entrusted the planting of the seed which shall take root, to grow and to be a blessing for all the world."

"But how cruel of us," exclaimed my wife, "never even to have inquired about him since we saw him last! I should like to see Eva,—I have so much to say to her! I wish you would ask her to call here this afternoon. And, Joseph, go and visit our brethren in faith. Let us comfort them, and render them whatever help we can."

"Yes, Dorothy," I replied. "I will go. And I will see that Miss Selner is informed of our plans, so that you can see her before our departure."

I left without further delay, and took the car downtown. It was past the noon hour when I reached the shop where Mr. Quail was employed. He was at work, but on receiving my name came out to see me. Our greetings were cordial, and for some moments he was occupied in answering my questions. I informed him of our sudden departure for Europe, and asked him if he could conveniently deliver my wife's message to Miss Selner, as our own time was limited, and was likely to be largely consumed in preparations for the journey. He readily agreed to do so at once, and volunteered also to notify the Believers of our plans. Then I continued :

"What in your opinion ought to be done to build up the Church?"

"Only one thing can be done at this time," he replied, "and that is, to use our best efforts toward gaining converts."

"How are the brethren succeeding in this direction?"

"Slowly. You know how hard it was to make converts of us, and yet we had Ezra for missionary; so we must be contented to make progress slowly."

"What do you think of building a church and admitting the people free to hear the new doctrine?"

"I do not think that would do at all; for, in the first place, the believers are not nearly numerous enough to fill a church; and, besides, we have at present no one competent to conduct the services for public worship in a church. We have unanimously chosen Mr. Fisher to be the successor of Ezra, and he conducts services for us in Mr. Bradley's house."

I took leave of Mr. Quail, and walked away, thinking seriously on his replies. What had I done for the Church? What should I do? What could I do? An idea occurred to me, and for some time I walked on, considering it. Then, having determined my course, I again took a car, and proceeded to the factory where Mr. Fisher was employed. There I entered the office and inquired for the proprietor. An elderly gentleman of thoughtful appearance presented himself, and I handed him my card, remarking that I desired a short interview with him on a business matter.

I followed him into his private office, and began :

" I should like some information concerning your business. And, in order that you may understand my request, let me state that I am to leave for Europe to-morrow morning, and that before I leave, if satisfactory arrangements can be made, I should like to invest with your firm a sum of money which, according to your average net earnings during the past five years, would be equal to an income of, say, \$2500 per year."

" But we do not need any such investment," he replied. " We have no interests for sale." Then, after a slight pause, " Are you in this line of business? "

" No, I am in no business. I did not desire the interest for myself. I wished to procure it in my name for the purpose of having you turn over the income to someone else,— an employé of yours."

" An employé of mine ! " he exclaimed in surprise. " Who can he be ? "

" Mr. Fisher."

" Why, that is strange ! "

" It may seem strange," I remarked ; " but I have some personal reasons for desiring such an arrangement."

“ You misunderstand the cause of my surprise,” he replied. “ The fact is, my partner and I are so far advanced in life that we think seriously of devoting less time and energy to business than we are now compelled to devote. We have been considering favourably a plan of incorporation ; and we have had some employés in mind to whom we desired to give interests in the shape of certain shares, to be paid for out of their earnings. Fisher was one of the men we had in view.”

“ And have you changed your mind ? ”

“ Well, yes,” he answered. “ We had originally an opinion that this man Fisher was a labour agitator, and at one time we were about to discharge him; but, to our surprise, he suddenly dropped his agitations and developed into a most skilful and conscientious workman. He became of value to us, and we advanced him from \$18 to \$25 per week. A short time ago we were on the point of notifying him that we would admit him into the proposed corporation, when he again relapsed into his old habits.”

“ How do you know that he has relapsed ? ” I asked.

“ Because for the past few weeks he has seemed absent-minded, and has not been at work regularly. He was away almost an entire week,—in fact, he is away to-day.”

“ But,” I observed, “ from what I know of the case, I believe you are doing him a great injustice. He has been absent because he has been in attendance on a friend, to whom he was very much attached, and who died a few days ago.”

“ Well, well ! ” was the reply. “ Then I must have been mistaken, and have done Fisher an injustice.”

“ How many shares did you propose to put aside for

Mr. Fisher," I inquired ; " and what were the shares equal to in dividends ? "

" Ten shares of \$1000 each ; equal, when based on the average of the past five years, to an income of \$1200 a year. This would have about doubled his income."

I then proposed Fisher's admission to the corporation, and offered to subscribe for ten additional shares on condition that the dividends should go to Fisher.

" I shall have to talk the matter over," replied the manufacturer.

" Will it be possible," I asked, " for you to do so now, while I wait ? Every moment of my time is valuable."

" I will try to be as brief as possible ; and in the meantime you may see our books, and I refer you to the Bank of America."

He proceeded into another room to consult his partner. I took the opportunity to go out to an adjacent telephone station, where I called up the Bank of America, and inquired as to the standing of the concern.

" We believe them to be honest, straightforward people," said the president.

" Would you deem it safe to invest \$10,000 with them ? " I asked.

" Yes," he replied.

On my return I found the partners still consulting. When they saw me they arose, and the gentleman who had first spoken to me said, " We have concluded to accept your offer."

" Very well," I replied. " And now, if one of you will come with me to my lawyer's, I will place the matter in his hands." And in an hour or so all was satisfactorily arranged.

As I reached our house, I met Dorothy descending the steps.

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“I don’t know—just for a short walk. I was too restless to stay in-doors any longer.”

I turned and accompanied her; and as we walked I told her what I had done for Fisher.

She smiled with pleasure. “I am glad you did that, Joseph,” she said. And with that she slipped her hand into my arm, and we walked on in silence.





CHAPTER LIV

THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THAT evening my wife and I started early for Mr. Bradley's house, to attend the meeting which Miss Selner had arranged, as the reader has already been informed in the opening chapter of this book. We were pleasantly greeted by Mrs. Bradley, who conducted us to the meeting-room. There we found all the Believers assembled. They saluted us warmly, and presented to us the following new converts: Mr. Schubert, Mr. Winslow, Mr. Cohen, Mrs. Eldridge, Mr. Douglas, a coloured man, and Mr. Okayama, a Japanese; six additional Believers, besides Mrs. Bradley, of whose conversion we had learned at the last meeting, and Mr. Valanti, whose adoption of the Faith had been communicated to us in Mr. Quail's letter.

The meeting-room was tastefully decorated, and arranged to accord with the theme of the new Church. On a platform, facing the assembly, was a small table containing earth, water and a plant. This was faced by a wood carving, of an ornate and beautiful design, on which appeared, carved, the words,

“HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY. CHURCH UNIVERSAL.”

On the mantel-shelf was a picture of Ezra, decorated

with leaves and flowers. Below the picture, and enclosed within the same frame, were engrossed the following lines by Longfellow :

“ Though to all there is not given
Strength for such sublime endeavour,
Thus to scale the walls of heaven,
And to leaven with fiery leaven
All the hearts of men forever ;
“ Yet all bards, whose hearts unblighted
Honour and believe the presage,
Hold aloft their torches lighted,
Gleaming through the realms benighted,
As they onward bear the message ! ”

When all were seated, Mr. Bradley, calling Walter and Alice to the platform and addressing them, said :

Bradley.—Tell me what you know about the New Faith.

Walter.—The New Faith is better than that in which I used to believe, because I now learn to see and hear.

Bradley.—Did you not see and hear before you heard of the New Faith ?

Walter.—Yes, sir, but I saw and heard as animals do, and I used to think that God was great because He did miracles in olden times.

Bradley.—Is it wrong to think in that way ?

Alice.—Yes, for it is like believing in idols, and that is wicked.

Bradley.—Why is it wicked ?

Walter.—Because believing in idols is wrong thinking of God.

Bradley.—What does wrong thinking of God lead to ?

Alice.—It leads to wrong thinking about ourselves.

Bradley.—What does wrong thinking about ourselves lead to ?

Walter.—It leads to wrong doing to other people.

Bradley.—What does right thinking about God do ?

Walter.—It shows us that God does not do miracles, but that God is wise ; that He only does what is right.

Bradley.—What else does it show us ?

Alice.—That He loves us, and that He is beautiful.

Bradley.—What else does it do ?

Walter.—It teaches right thinking about ourselves, and right doing to other people.

Bradley.—If a boy believes all this, what good will it do him ?

Walter.—It will not let him believe in idols, and he will love God and be kind to people and to animals.

Bradley.—How may we learn all this ?

Alice.—By learning to see and learning to hear and learning to think.

Bradley.—How should we learn ?

Walter.—By asking questions of earth, water and plants.

Bradley.—Why ?

Alice.—Because these things are God's works, and they will teach us the truth about God.

Bradley.—Why do we wear leaves and flowers on our heads in church and at home when we pray ?

Walter.—Because they tell us very quickly what God is, and we put them on our heads as a sign that we know it.

Bradley.—Is there any other reason ?

Alice.—Yes, we put them on to show God that we love Him.

Bradley.—Is there any other reason ?

Walter.—Yes, to show other people that when we love God we also love them, and that we are to be kind to all living things.

“ And now,” added Mr. Bradley, “ we will close the exercises by singing Hymn 64, to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*.”

Hymn books were passed among us, and all joined in singing, to the familiar tune, the beautiful words of Heber :

“ There ’s not a tint that paints the rose,
Or decks the lily fair,
Or streaks the humblest flower that grows,
But God has placed it there.

“ There ’s not of grass a single blade,
Or leaf of loveliest green,
Where heavenly skill is not displayed
And heavenly wisdom seen.

“ There ’s not a star whose twinkling light
Illumes the spreading earth,
And cheers the silent gloom of night,
But mercy gave it birth.

“ There ’s not a place on earth’s vast round,
In ocean deep, or air,
Where skill and wisdom are not found :
For God is everywhere.

“ Around, beneath, below, above,
Wherever space extends,
There God displays His boundless love,
And power with mercy blends.”

“ That will be all for this evening,” said Mr. Bradley, as he kissed the children good-night.

Brother Fisher then arose and said : “ My friends, let us rise in silent devotion to God, and in reverent remembrance of our dearly beloved brother, absent in the flesh, but present with us in spirit.”

Brother Moore closed the silent devotion by saying :
“ May we find grace in the sight of God, so that He
make our hearts, our minds and our souls steadfast in
our Faith.”

And all the Believers responded, “ Steadfast.”





CHAPTER LV

THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE CHURCH

AFTER some informal conversation, Brother Bradley arose and said: "It seems to me we can utilise the evening in the interest of the Universal Faith; and that this be done to advantage, I suggest that there be a chairman for the evening."

"Brother Fisher," spoke several of the Believers, and Brother Bradley then said: "It has been moved and seconded that Brother Fisher be the chairman for the evening. What is your pleasure?"

"Question" having been called, the motion was put and carried.

Report of a meeting of the Believers, at the house of Mr. Bradley, New York, Oct. 13th, 8 P.M.

Mr. Fisher in the chair.

Morton.—Fellow-Believers, Members of the Church Universal: My wife has proposed a plan for the enlargement of the Church; she proposes that we have the reports of all the meetings printed in book form for general circulation. I add that I have, from the beginning, kept a record of the incidents, pertinent to the subject, which came under my own observation, and I herewith tender that record as part of the matter for publication.

Fisher.—What is the pleasure of the meeting ?

Quail.—In order to bring the question up for discussion, I move that we accept the suggestion.

The motion was seconded, and the question was open for discussion.

Moore.—I favour the idea; but I think that before the matter is published it should be revised. I refer to eliminations. There are, no doubt, many things that should be stricken out.

Quail.—I am inclined to think there are some things in the reports that would tend to create antagonism. Would it not be best to eliminate all such ?

Bradley.—I do not think so. I do not think it would be fair to the public to eliminate anything.

Winslow.—I think that not only would any material eliminations be unfair to the public, but that such a course would be likely to destroy in part the value of the presentation.

Cohen.—I have read the entire report several times, and I agree with Brother Bradley and with Brother Winslow.

Mrs. Morton.—I agree with the opinions last expressed.

Moore.—I withdraw my objections, and move for the adoption of the proposition.

Brother Fisher thereupon put the motion.

Fisher.—The question is now before the meeting ; and it seems to me that, in discussing it, it would be in order to permit the expression of any views that may bear upon the subject of promulgation.

Morton.—I think the suggestion of Brother Fisher a good one.

Fisher.—Discussion on the subject of promulgation is now in order.

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Quail.—I find it exceedingly difficult to make converts. I have tried among the poor and illiterate, but the idea seems to make a very feeble impression upon them ; in fact, it seems to antagonise them.

Valanti.—It would seem to me that the proposed printing of the reports for general circulation would be a most effective method of spreading our Faith. It would be an educator, preparing the people for the acceptance of the Church Universal. I favour it.

Okayama.—I am heartily in favour of the publication, and if it prove successful, I should favour its translation into the Japanese language ; for I am of the opinion that a Universal Church, on the basis on which ours is built, would be acceptable to the people of Japan.

Winslow.—I think it would be interesting and profitable to hear more from Brother Okayama.

Fisher.—Brother Okayama is asked to continue.

Okayama.—My opinions on this subject relate principally to the people of Japan. I am firmly of the opinion that our Faith would be acceptable to the Japanese people. Various attempts have been made to introduce Christianity among them, but up to this time the impression produced has been far below the expectation of the missionaries, and, I may say, far below what might have been expected from the energy put forth. Nor do I think that the near future offers a brighter outlook so far as Christianity is concerned. It is true that the opinions in Japan on paganism are undergoing a change. Contact with the Western world has developed a spirit of scepticism with regard to pagan deities and forms. The people, at times, listen eagerly to Christian missionaries, but when they are asked to become Christians they turn away. As a rule the high ethical doctrines

in Christianity attract them, but Christian dogmas and Christian theology are repellent to them.

You may be able to form a fair opinion on this subject from a recital of an incident which occurred in Tokio. At a meeting assembled to listen to a missionary, after the missionary had given the assembled people an outline of his faith, one among the auditors, an elderly man, arose and said, "May I ask you some questions?"

"Yes," replied the missionary; "I shall be glad to answer."

"You say," began the Japanese, "that God came on earth. Was He who came on earth the God of the Christians?"

"Yes; and He is likewise the God of the Japanese, and of the people of the whole world."

"But we know of no such God here."

"I have been sent," replied the missionary, "to make Him known to you."

"What good can it do us," asked the Japanese, "to have Him made known?"

"You can, by knowing Him and believing in Him, be saved from eternal suffering, and you will receive, besides, eternal life in Heaven."

"How do you know that?" asked the man.

"Because God said so," replied the missionary.

"How do you know?"

"Because it is so recorded in this Bible," answered the missionary, holding up a Bible.

"You say," continued the Japanese, "that the God of the Christians and the God of the Japanese came down on earth among a nation called Jews."

"Yes."

"You say further that they killed Him."

" Yes."

" Was not that a wicked deed ? "

" It was very wicked," replied the missionary.

" Did God, then, want to die ? " asked the Japanese.

" Yes, He wanted to die in order to save you and me from eternal suffering."

" Was He compelled to die in order to save us ? "

" He died to save us."

" Yes, you told us so before," remarked the man; " but you have not answered my question. I ask it again : Was He compelled to die in order to save us ? "

" Yes, for otherwise He would not have died."

" And now," said the Japanese, addressing himself to the audience, " let us see what we are asked to believe : We are asked to believe that God came on earth to die; that He was compelled to die; that because the Jews killed a god, who was compelled to die, they were very wicked; that Christians were told of these things by God, and as proof they show us the book which they call a Bible. But what kind of a god can that be who is compelled to suffer or die in order that he may save some of the creatures he has made ? Would not such a god show a feebleness of resources and power which would make him less potent in governing the world than is our Emperor in governing Japan ? That the story is not even ingeniously concocted is evident from the fact that the Jews are called wicked for having killed him. How could they have been wicked if the god had to die ? Were the Jews more powerful than this god ? Yet, while these people discomfited a god, they were themselves impotent against the nation which vanquished them. What absurdities, then, have not been presented to us by this Christian !

" Go elsewhere, friend, with thy tales. Thou and

thy fellow-Christians are wont to call us barbarians and pagans; but it seems to me that so long as the tales that have been told us are the belief of Christians, then are Christians in truth more pagan and barbarous than we."

They who come to us with romances and stories forget that we of the Orient are more clever in concocting stories and romances than are Occidentals. Their inventions are clumsy and crude when compared with ours. The art of story-telling in its highest perfection is an Oriental attribute, and such it must ever be. There is, however, this difference between us. We of the Orient never take these romances seriously to heart. We never hate or kill those who consider romances simply as parables.

On pages 551 of the report of the Parliament of Religions, held at your great Chicago Exposition, will be found the following by Horin Toki, the representative of Japan :

"We Buddhists welcome any who are earnest after the truth, but can we keep silent to see the falsehood disturbing the peace of our country? . . . Do you think it right for one to urge upon a stranger to believe what he does not like, and call that stranger foolish, barbarous, ignorant and obstinate, on account of the latter denying the proposal made by the former?"

In the same report, on page 436, Pung Kwang Yu, the Chinese representative of Confucianism, says :

"I beg to suggest that such men be selected for missionary work in China as shall combine with their religious qualifications a proficiency in other branches of human knowledge, such as sociology, philosophy, political economy, natural science, chemistry, international law, astronomy, geology and mathematics."

Come, then, and teach us God made manifest in all these ways, through His works, and you will have no

difficulty in making converts ; but refrain from coming on the unprofitable mission of trying to persuade us to exchange our clever romances for your clumsy ones.

Japan offers a great field for the promulgation of religion, but the religion must be of a quality acceptable to the intelligent. The unintelligent require no new legends, for they have already plenty of such, more suitable to the Japanese genius than are foreign legends. I am almost sure that the very belief which we have adopted is calculated to win over the Japanese people.

Schubert.—My friends and Co-Believers: The remarks of Brother Okayama remind me of an experience of my own some eight years ago. I was in Yuma, Arizona, and visited the Indian school on the Reservation. The teacher pointed with pride to the progress of the Indian boys and girls in education. I was surprised to see Apache and Apache-Mohave Indian boys and girls read and write and spell and do sums in arithmetic quite as cleverly as other children in the same section. Seeing the pictures, "The Ten Stations of the Cross," displayed on the walls of the schoolroom, I asked, "Do you also teach religion here?"

"Yes," replied the teacher.

"Are the children as apt in this study as in others?"

"No, it is next to impossible to teach an Indian child religion."

"Why is that?" I inquired.

"Because they seem to look upon such things as are depicted in the 'Stations of the Cross' as not convincing arguments. They cannot understand why it was necessary for a great chief of Heaven to permit any indignity to be put upon him."

And yet the American Indians were to a great extent

believers in one God, or, as they called him, "Great Spirit."

It seems to me that a religion built upon legends and miracles, the outgrowth of Caucasian experiences, will fail of acceptance among the Turanians. Equally would a similar religion of Turanians be unacceptable to the Caucasian. Such a religion, in order to be even tacitly assented to by alien races, must be forced upon them by coercion. On the other hand, the religion of the Universal Church, to which we have given our adherence, would, in my opinion, be received as readily by the Turanian as by the Caucasian races.

And now, as to the proposed publication of the reports. There is, in my opinion, nothing more likely to promote the growth of the Church Universal than this very publication. I have read the reports several times, and I esteem their circulation among the people as of primary importance. They should not only be circulated among our own people, but they should be translated into foreign languages and circulated in foreign countries.

These reports, in general circulation, will have the effect of stimulating the formation of many other organisations similar to the Twentieth Century Club.

Besides, it is highly probable that a number of congregations throughout the land are already with us in spirit. The advent of these reports in the form of a book may determine such congregations to adopt our Faith. For all these reasons, I am strongly in favour of their publication.

Quail.—I should like to be informed by Brother Cohen how, in his opinion, our Faith would be received by the Jews.

Cohen.—I think at first the orthodox and Reform Jews

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would look upon our faith, as I did at the start, as some form of idolatry. Some few among both divisions would no doubt join our Church readily. As soon, however, as the Jewish people could be made to understand the truth as we understand it, they would join us in great numbers. I am of opinion that the publication of the reports would hasten on the good work.

Moore.—I now call for the question on the publication of the reports as proposed by Brother and Sister Morton.

Brother Fisher then put the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

Douglas.—If Sister Selner feels disposed to speak, I should like to hear her on the subject.

Miss Selner.—Beloved Sisters and Beloved Brethren : I will confine my remarks to the effect which I believe our Faith will have on women and children.

As conditions are to-day, there is little religion in the home. Some families limit their home worship to grace at meals, and it may be safely said that many have no home worship at all. At church, the minister preaches a sermon which frequently is intended to prove certain dogmas.

It must follow that religious education is on the whole but feeble. This condition is changed radically as soon as our Faith is introduced. The morning and evening prayer, the daily religious exercises and lessons for the children, as witnessed by us this evening, in this room, make the mother the high priestess of the home and the father the high priest. The exercises and lessons for the children will teach not only the children but the parents. And what will the lessons be? Will they be dogmas or sectarian postulates? No! The child will first of all learn how to learn, to unfold and to develop. It will learn to see the beauties

in creation, and to understand what beauty stands for. Children will learn that unjust acts, unrighteous thoughts, are stored in the mind and inscribe ugly lines on the soul. They will learn that ugly lines multiplied will make an ugly man or woman. They will learn that while it is quite easy to place these ugly lines on the soul, it is very difficult to remove them. They will learn that mere faith in God, together with bad acts and evil thoughts, cannot purify the mind or remove the ugly lines from the soul. They will learn that a beautiful soul is infinitely preferable to a beautiful face. They will learn that an ugly soul makes a beautiful face ugly, and that a beautiful soul makes an ugly face beautiful. They will learn that the chiefest human possession is a beautiful soul. They will learn that God loves the soul of a white man, a black man or of a yellow man equally ; that soul beauty is His criterion, and that it should be ours. They will learn to reach out both hands, and to receive the poor, the despised and the outcasts and to lift them up.

They will learn that the highest human knowledge is to be obtained through the study of phenomena ; that the study of the relative, pursued with due reverence, and with awakened intelligence, will show us the way to find God. They will learn that true human happiness may be attained only by making other human beings happy. They will learn not to inflict pain on animals, much less on a human being. They will learn that while wickedness can be concealed from men, it cannot be concealed from God or from the soul. They will learn that all lines of colour or sect or political division among men are arbitrary and artificial.

They will learn to fear only themselves, and to love their neighbours. They will learn that differences of

opinion are to be adjusted by study, by reason and by arbitration. Learning all this, they will forget to be brutal, intemperate, suspicious, hypocritical, cruel, deceitful, avaricious and uncharitable.

What grander, nobler, holier work can engage the attention of human beings than the promulgation of a faith which will do these things? This, then, it is, which is to convert the home into a Temple of God. This, then, it is which is to sanctify the home and to make every member of it a true and faithful child of God and a blessing to his neighbour.





CHAPTER LVI

CRITICISM THE PATHWAY

Mrs. Morton.—I should like to hear from Brother Valanti on his conversion to the Faith.

Valanti.—My dearly beloved friends, my sisters and my brethren in the true Faith : It will be somewhat difficult for me to impart the information asked by Sister Morton, as my conversion was not brought about by external incidents, like those related by Brother Quail and by Brother Bradley. My conversion came as the result of internal meditation.

One day, not long after our last meeting, I had occasion to go to Jersey City. On my return, shortly after six o'clock in the evening, while crossing the river, my attention was attracted to the great crowd of working-men at the forward end of the ferryboat. I went down among them. A considerable number were Italians, and the greater portion of the remainder seemed to be Poles and Bohemians. Some impulse caused me to speak to them about our Faith, and the influence it would exert in ameliorating their condition. Not that I was then a believer, but I was prompted to speak as if I were. I had expected to be misunderstood, or even to be scoffed at; but I was disappointed. I was not

scoffed at, nor was I misunderstood. I was simply stared at in blank stupidity. The men seemed as incapable of understanding any idea outside of their daily routine labour as an ox or an ass would be. Yes, these men, my then fellow-believers in Roman Catholicism, seemed to be infants in mind. Yet they had the form of men.

“Tell me, O God,” came the prayer from my heart, “tell me, who has withheld the penetrating, illuminating rays of intelligence from the minds of these men?” And the answer was quick and distinct, “Their kings and their priests.”

Thus meditating, I reached my home. “Let me read again,” I thought, “the remarks which Brother Moore addressed to me toward the close of the last meeting.” I took my copy of the report and read:

“Roman Catholicism has done in religion what absolutism does in government. Both reprobate criticism, both enforce an unquestioned acquiescence in their authority, and both stimulate veneration for their institutions. And these institutions persist; but when? Only when the law of development is arrested or is forced out of existence within their territory. But what purpose do these institutions serve by their persistence? What are they but reactionary forces,—forces that retard amelioration? And if the law of development is a law universal, if it is God’s law, are not such institutions contrary to universal law, are they not contrary to God?”

“What, then, is criticism but protestation against error and against stagnation? It serves the same purpose in social life that salt serves in the ocean. What is, therefore, more bound to invigorate an institution, whether religious or political, than criticism?”

“ Yet more than this : An institution may be said to live at all only when it lives through free criticism. Criticism is its life, its soul, its warrant and its authority for living. And criticism involves the unhampered right of protestation.

“ Protestation is, therefore, a law of development, a law of God.”

I tried to generalise on this theme. I felt that there was a grand and central principle involved in these statements; but my mind refused to lend itself to my inclination, and the words which I had read seemed to mock my efforts to comprehend their meaning. Then my will assumed a dictatorial sway, and seemed to assert in terms of stern authority: “ You must, you shall, master what is before you ; your soul’s salvation depends upon it.” And so I renewed the attempt, but my mind became confused, and I could not think as I wished.

Falling on my knees, I prayed to God to give me light; and, as if by a miracle, God opened a path. I would endeavour to place the matter in a concrete form, and thence to work my way upward toward the abstract.

Placing two objects on the table before me, I called them the right and the left cerebral hemispheres. “ Here,” I said, “ is the brain of man. What is it that induces this organ of consciousness and volition to operate in one man so wonderfully as to enable his soul to soar up beyond the outer Heaven and to comprehend the celestial music of universal harmony ? What is it that so clogs the avenues of the cerebral hemispheres of another man as to prevent light from reaching his soul, and to leave but a conventional division line between him and the brute ? ”

"It is education," was the answer. What is education? And it seemed to me that education was the reception of outward ideas and the adjustment of them in the mind concomitantly with the ideas already there. Yet, if that were a true definition, it did not answer my question, did not solve my problem; I must continue my search.

Every one of the men who composed the group on the ferryboat receives outward ideas, and adjusts them in the mind concomitantly with the ideas already there; hence receives education. How, then, is the great difference between them and the educated to be accounted for? And the answer came suddenly and with striking force: The men I first spoke of receive ideas without any process of discrimination; the educated receive ideas only after thorough discrimination. The former accept and assimilate ideas without any process of criticism; the latter never accept any idea without criticism.

Criticism, then, is the pathway leading toward intellectual enlightenment, toward intellectual freedom. If this be true, what must follow whenever ideas are received without criticism? What but brutish stupidity and mental blindness? Who, then, was to blame for the darkened animal souls, the great lack of intelligence of the men I saw on the ferryboat—yes, and of the hundreds of millions of others like them? Who but the church of which they are members. And was a church like this performing God's work? "No!" I cried. "Such a church is an agency of retrogression, a block in the road toward amelioration. Such a church is anti-Christian and anti-social."

Then I knelt down, and thanked God that He had opened my eyes; and I arose a Believer in the Church

Universal, the very same Church in which you all believe. This is the story of my conversion.

Bradley.—I thank God that the Church Universal was born in America, in the United States.

Moore.—I should be glad to hear from Sister Morton.

Mrs. Morton.—You will find the story of the conversion of my dear husband and myself in the book, when the reports are printed. At this time I will simply repeat a few lines by Wordsworth, which seem to me to embody the ideals of our Faith, and to be appropriate to the occasion :

“ Here Man more purely lives, less oft doth fall,
More promptly rises, walks with nicer heed,
More safely rests, dies happier, is freed
Earlier from cleansing fires, and gains withal
A brighter crown.”





CHAPTER LVII

ISRAEL

Okayama.—I should like to ask Brother Cohen a question. Did Solomon build a temple in Jerusalem to the Jehovah who had commanded that no graven image be made and worshipped?

Cohen.—Yes, so we read in the Bible.

Okayama.—Why, then, did Solomon cause two golden angels, called Cherubim, to be placed on the Mercy-seat above the Ark in the Holy of Holies?

Cohen.—I do not know; but this much is said in relation thereto: The Cherubim, with faces inclined in prayerful reverence toward the Mercy-seat, indicated prayer; not to the Cherubim, but to Jehovah. The faces of the Cherubim, "one to another," and "their wings spread out on high," covering the Mercy-seat, were, no doubt, symbols involving some hidden meaning; but what they were intended to signify I am unable to tell.

Okayama.—Can you tell, Brother Quail?

Quail.—No, but I will venture this as my interpretation of the symbol: The two Cherubim, no doubt, represented two forces, each of which was to meditate on Mercy and to find God; and, under the shelter of the outstretched wings, under the spiritual power of

these two forces, were to be gathered all the nations of the world.

These two forces, it seems to me, were Israel, the spiritual force, and Criticism, the intellectual force.

Okayama.—A beautiful symbol, and an interesting interpretation; but I fail to perceive its application, at least so far as the Jews are concerned. I have learned from the Bible that Israel was at one time a spiritual factor; but is not Israel dead? Did not this people die some twenty centuries ago?

Quail.—The Jews as a political body ceased to exist twenty centuries ago; but Israel, as a spiritual force, has not ceased to exist, will never cease to exist.

Okayama.—Was Israel selected by God and predestined for this high accomplishment, this exalted mission?

Quail.—Had you asked me that question before the light of our Faith entered my soul, I should have answered you in the affirmative. But with the new light which I have received, I answer, no. I no longer believe that God elects and predestines; for, by so doing, God could not be Absolute Justice, which I now believe Him to be.

Okayama.—Will you please explain more fully what you wish to convey?

Quail.—I will try my best to do so. From a hasty reading of Scripture, we may erroneously infer that Abraham was the elect of God, and that Abraham's descendants were predestined for spiritual exaltation. A more critical reading will, however, show that Abraham, with earnestness of mind and soul, sought God and thus found Him. The same may be said of the Jews, who, so long as they continued to search for God with singleness of purpose, deserved the title Israel.

When, however, they turned from this course, and deserted God by lapsing into idolatry, they no longer merited that designation.

Okayama.—According to your definition, then, Israel does not mean Jew, but means rather “a searcher after God,” does it not?

Quail.—Yes, and more than that; for it likewise means “a fighter for God,” one who, finding the path, strives with all his soul to show this path to others.

Okayama.—Ah, yes, I see now! If my people, the Japanese, should strive as you say, and, finding God, should strive still further to lead other nations to God, they would then be Israel. Is that what you mean?

Quail.—Yes, that is precisely what I mean.

Okayama.—This seems certainly more in accord with justice than does the theory of election and predestination.

Quail.—It not only seems so, but is so. Every individual sane in mind, and therefore free to search after God, who, finding Him, brings others to God, is entitled to be called Israel; and the same is true of nations.

Okayama.—In the beginning of our remarks, you spoke of two forces, the spiritual and the intellectual; but in your conclusion I observe you omit mention of the intellectual.

Quail.—Your observations are correct. Originally the spiritual and the intellectual forces were distinct and separate; in the Church Universal these two forces are united, and become inseparably one force.

Okayama.—The intellectual force will become religious?

Quail.—Yes, and the religious force will become intellectual.



CHAPTER LVIII

THE PEACE OF GOD

MRS. BRADLEY was called upon, and arose.
Mrs. Bradley.—My dear friends: I am sorry that I am not able to make a speech, but whatever is on my mind I will say.

Ever since I have been converted, I feel that I am living in a different world. Every object has become to me a sign and a witness of God. Every human being seems now to be a fellow-soul, a neighbour and a spiritual kin. I seem to feel the suffering of any strange child as if it were my own, and there is a great desire within me to be of service to my fellow-souls and to remove suffering.

I see the angels of God around me wherever I turn, wherever I am and at all times, and these angels are God's laws. They teach me, they guide me and they direct me. But as yet I cannot hear them or see them as clearly and distinctly as I should like. My constant prayer to God is that He give me light, ever more light, in order that I may be able to be of greater service to my fellow-souls. The peace of God now overshadows me, and I feel a spiritual joy in believing that I dwell here and forever in the Holy Temple of God.

For all these blessings, I am forever indebted to my dear husband, to the Church Universal and to my children. I saw the wonderful effect our Faith had upon my children ; I saw that as our Faith entered their young minds and sank deep into their souls, there began to shoot forth from them the spiritual rays of intelligence. The pruning shear of knowledge quickly cut away the dead branches of error, and, like an invigorated plant, relieved of decaying obstructions, they began to thrive and to blossom. I saw that they were on the road to spiritual and intellectual awakening ; and when I saw all this, I became converted.

I pray with all my heart and with all my soul that God may enlighten all the people, and that all the people may soon accept our Faith, and that the whole world shall become as one family, believers in the Church Universal. May God ever keep us steadfast in the Faith ; and in the name of the One and only God, and in remembrance of Christ the Saviour, the regenerator, the uplifter, let us proclaim that we are ever Steadfast.

“ Steadfast ! ” was the response by all.

Mrs. Eldridge.—My dear friends and neighbours : Like Sister Bradley, I feel now, since my conversion, that the Peace of God has entered my soul, and that a faith sure and firm and clear has come to me instead of the doubt and uncertainty of the past.

But O my friends, this peace is disturbed by great fears. I fear much: I fear myself. The selfishness, the narrowness, the vanity and the sinfulness of my past life may be obliterated by the new, the grander, the nobler life which should follow obedience to the New Faith. In this I have perfect confidence ; but I fear the future,—I fear myself. I fear that I am too feeble, too

weak, and I fear that my weakness may prevent me from living up to the standard which our Faith has set before me. How, then, may my fear be removed?

I therefore ask your prayers in my behalf. Pray for me and with me, O my friends; pray that I may be saved from my greatest enemy, that I may be saved from myself. O God, help me to pray.

“The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
If Thou the Spirit give by which I pray :
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed;
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where Thou say 'st it may ;
Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way,
No one can find it ; Father ! Thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe these thoughts into my mind.”

The Believers then knelt in silent prayer.

Douglas.—I, too, my friends, ask your prayers ; not for myself alone, but for my people, the people of my race and colour. After I had received the Faith, I made haste to impart it to my friends, to the coloured people I knew. I expected that our Faith would be joyfully accepted by them ; that in its acceptance they would see a way toward spiritual light and true emancipation, but I was doomed to bitter disappointment.

As well attempt to reason with tombstones in a cemetery as to reason with them. Oh, how deep is the gloom in which their souls are entombed ! It is like the valley of dry bones spoken of in Ezekiel. I fear that the prison of ignorance in which they are immured is an impenetrable stronghold. Within this prison they are held in bondage and slavery, and there seems no escape,—no release.

Cohen.—Say not so, my friend and brother; there

shall, indeed, be an escape and a release. The Church Universal shall cause a voice to resound, and they, hearing it, shall struggle manfully for freedom, and the shackles and bandages shall fall from them, and they shall be free.

Winslow.—Fellow-Believers : We have been told by previous speakers that there is difficulty in making converts ; but why restrict our primary efforts to this direction ?

The essential difference between other religious systems and ours lies in this:—that while the others mainly follow the “ *Laissez-faire*,” or “ Let-alone ” policy, our faith directs that we strive with all our power to right wrong in every department of social life.

With this end in view, I wish to recall to your minds the remarks made by the revered founder of our Faith. He submitted a plan for the organisation of the people and for the appointment of some twenty-six committees.

It appears to me that, primarily, all our energies should be exerted in this direction. Practical results would command the respectful attention of the people, and would largely remove the difficulties of making converts. When once in successful operation, and on a sufficiently large scale, these committees may become the most potent factors for amelioration that the world has ever had.

Something of this kind was attempted by the Plebeians of Rome, in the form of a Tribune of the People. This office was, however, performed very imperfectly. To-day we have a much better form of tribuneship in the newspapers and magazines ; but these are incomparably inferior in value as a factor in amelioration to what the voice of the people would be in the form proposed.

Especially would such committees be effective were their labours actuated by the highest religious motives.

Some persons are of opinion that amelioration may come through legal enactments. To some extent this is true; but a power greater than laws on statute books is that of thoroughly aroused public opinion. Public opinion that is governed by system, by moderation, by wisdom, by equity and by utility can find ample scope for real achievement, all on the lines laid down for us by our Faith.

And is there not room for this work? Let me touch upon an instance in my own sphere of experience. I am a commercial traveller in the drug business. I have occasion, at times, to go over, with druggists, prescriptions by physicians. Many of these prescriptions are so poorly written that they can be read only with great difficulty. Yet some of them call for drugs which, if they vary in the least, produce a compound entirely different from that prescribed. Need I tell you that, in this respect, the physician who fails to write plainly is guilty of gross and sometimes criminal carelessness?

Public opinion aroused on this subject, backed up by evidence of the committees, would soon prevent this evil.

Equally guilty — yes, more so — are the vast hordes of unscrupulous knaves who adulterate food, and thus enrich themselves at the expense of the means and the health of the people. And what of those knaves who knowingly provide the public with poisonous foods, who deceive in prices, weights and measures, or who live by sweating the wages of labour?

The wrongs of the sailor,—do they not deserve attention and redress? A slave at sea, and food for the

crimp on land, he lives and labours, like the characters of Dante, in the region of the unblessed.

What strange crime has the infant committed that it should be made to suffer through lack of food and through insufficient covering? And around us, everywhere, is there any lack of misery and injustice to be remedied? The people boast of their freedom, of their sovereign right to rule; but who in reality are the real rulers? The real sovereigns,—are they not the bosses?

And so we might continue in an almost endless recapitulation of error and wrong, until by the mere headings we had formed a bulky catalogue of them. Can we wonder, then, that poverty and crime flourish when the evils which exist are permitted to continue without hindrance?

If we are, indeed, to be the pioneers of a new era, the pioneers of amelioration, the pioneers of the Church Universal, then let us, as true soldiers, buckle on the armour and unsheath the sword. Let us fight the good fight with all our power, with all our might and with all our soul, and we may rest assured that God will establish our work.





CHAPTER LIX

STEADFAST !

Moore.—I should like to hear from Brother Fisher.

Fisher.—Dearly Beloved Fellow-Believers : As we all know, it is the custom of our chairman to review what has been said. I will therefore proceed in accordance with that custom.

While I am strongly inclined to favour the views of Brother Winslow, I am at the same time prompted to present some difficulties in the way ; difficulties which I hope can be overcome.

That the labours of the committees would tend toward practical amelioration there can be no doubt. But when ? Only, as Brother Winslow has told us, when “ actuated by the highest religious motives.” And in this opinion I agree with him ; for organisation not thus actuated would serve to no good purpose,—on the contrary, it would probably tend to increase existing evils.

How, then, will it be possible for us to secure the right kind of membership on the proposed committees, unless from among our own organisation ? Shall we strive to obtain members from among adherents of the prevailing churches ? Would such persons be willing to engage in this work under our banner when they

abstain from doing so under their own ? Are they not likely to refuse our request ? I think so, and for two reasons : first, because they may be opposed to our cause ; second, because they seem to be opposed to the kind of work we have outlined.

Shall we ask them to aid in any effort to do away with boss-rule ? Are they not likely to reply, as they so often do, that Christ did not command such work ? I think they will so reply, and most likely they will quote Scripture to sustain their view. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," is their wall of excuse, behind which they permit themselves the liberty of inaction.

It is true that we might argue with them. We could show that while Cæsar in Christ's time was one man, a man in whom was centred all political authority, on the other hand, in our day and in this country, the sovereignty, the right to rule, is vested in the American people. We could thus show them that the American people are now the Cæsars, that each citizen is a Cæsar. And if each citizen is a Cæsar, must not each render to the other that which he should ? Do we then "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" ? By refraining from the initiative work, from the caucus, do we not take away the rule from the rightful Cæsar ? Do we not thus indirectly turn it over to the bosses ?

Judging from the past, however, I am inclined to think that they will pay no attention to any argument that may be offered on this subject. Or, as a final excuse, they will be likely to say that Church and State are, in this country, separate institutions, and that it is best to keep them such.

While it is true that the best interests of the people may be conserved by non-interference of the Church in matters of government, yet it is likewise true that the

interests of the people could be largely served by a church which would act as director, adviser, umpire and guide in the initiative work of citizenship. This work can be done without interference with actual government; and by thus doing it we can "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

Nor can we expect the other churches to aid us in efforts toward amelioration of the social condition. I am inclined to think they would refuse if they were asked. They would most likely say that they are now doing whatever they can to relieve distress and poverty. But are alms-giving and church-going the end of Christianity? So it would seem; and in this respect we cannot fail to see the great difference between Christian ministers and Christ. There has been perhaps no time in the history of the world when there were more church-going and more alms-giving than among the Jews in the time of Christ; but Christ opposed that narrow system, and showed by His work that He was a worker, a doer, a social leveller, a social up-builder and a social reformer.

Can that system be properly denominated charitable, uplifting, civilising, which limits its efforts to relieving the beggar, and which ignores the palpable and evident causes that generate beggars? If weighed in the balance which Christ provided, would not the Christian churches be found wanting?

These, then, are some of the difficulties in the way of beginning our labours by an attempt at organisation at this time. To overcome these difficulties, I would suggest that we begin our primary labours by speaking to the people in public assemblies, and thus inform them of the character and the scope of the work before us. This method will no doubt be more effectual in

gaining converts than the method we have pursued up to this time. As soon as we have gained over a sufficient number of converts we can then begin the practical work in social amelioration. We shall then be more certain of successful results than by any earlier attempt at amelioration.

But while the informing of the people is an important branch of our work, it is by no means the most important. Our attention should be directed to a work which is of equal importance, and more imperatively necessary at this time, and that is the education of ourselves and of the converts who come to us. The principal aim of the Church Universal is the awakening of spiritual consciousness. But what conception can we have of spiritual consciousness unless we are taken out of the darkness which ignorance casts about the soul ? As yet, we but discern the shining light of knowledge afar off. How can we hope to bring others close to the light when we are ourselves so far from it ?

We should therefore so perfect our organisation as to provide that systematic instruction which, when obtained, shall enable us to see the more clearly and to comprehend the more certainly. We must, for the time being, become pupils, in order that presently we may become teachers. It is true that the founders of other religions, as a rule, had no need of becoming pupils; but then those others were sages and prophets, while we are but ordinary workingmen.

The remarks of Sister Eldridge remind me of another marked difference between us and the pioneers of other religious systems. All other systems portray their initiators as saints ; whereas we of the Church Universal are but ordinary, every-day men and women. Not being saints, we have — each of us — to struggle, first of

all, with ourselves. We see the high ideal as a bright and shining light above us, and our constant aim must be to approach closer to that ideal. This will be progress, this will be development.

We should not overlook the fact that, in our striving, we must necessarily be hindered by the reactionary inclinations and tendencies which, to a great extent, have been ingrained in us by our mode of thought and action prior to our reception of the Faith. Only through education and constant struggle with ourselves can we hope to modify this reactionary trend ; this we should ever have in mind.

While ours seems to be a humble beginning, it need not follow that our labour will be in vain, or without ultimate results of good. On the contrary, I believe most firmly that if we but prove steadfast in our Faith, and work zealously for its realisation, it will in the end accomplish even more than we now believe possible.

Observe :—The twenty-six volumes of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* are supposed to contain a summary of all the great men and all great human achievements from the beginning of the historic era to the present time. If we excluded from these books the articles irrelevant to the actual up-building of civilisation, we could probably reduce them in number to one half. Yet these comparatively few up-builders among the many thousand millions of human beings have, through their priceless labour, lifted savage men and women up to the level of our present comparatively high state of civilisation.

If this was a possible achievement for the few,—for the few who were, in the main, compelled to perform their heroic tasks amid great trials and hindrances,—how much greater and grander will not the

achievement be when the many, the millions, enter the field of noble endeavour !

When once this task shall have been accomplished,—the awakening of the many, of the millions,—it will probably be possible to fill twenty-six more volumes with the recital of greater, grander achievements performed in one hundred years than had been previously realised in four thousand.

In considering the whole question which we have set before ourselves, ought we not also to consider that it may be deemed an act of presumption on our part to enter the field as pioneers of this great undertaking ? Would it not be more suited to our present capacity, to our present station, to follow humbly the lead of abler and better leaders ?

To which I reply, “ Yes, if there were such leaders.” But we fail to see them. There are, indeed, college professors ; but they are busy teaching the sons of wealthy men. There are the ministers of the various churches, but they are busy preparing and delivering sermons on dogmas and creeds. And so, finding no one to direct us in this work, we will venture out and ourselves seek the road ; and when we have found it we will freely ask our neighbours to follow us.

May God help us in our endeavour !

And now, my friends, as the night is far advanced, we should adjourn this meeting, out of regard for our dear sister and our dear brother, who are so soon to leave us on their journey to Europe.

Schubert.—May the God of the Universe guard and protect them, and cause them to return to us free from harm ; and may they and we soon again be united, ever steadfast in our Faith.

“ Steadfast ! ” was the response.



CHAPTER LX

MUCH CAUSE FOR HOPE

THE following morning I rose early in order to attend to such correspondence as was necessary before our departure. I had finished dictating my letters, and was seated at my desk, giving final attention to one or two minor business matters, when Dorothy entered the library.

"Are you busy, Joseph?" she asked.

"Not at all. Is there something you wish me to do? If so we have plenty of time. It is only twenty minutes after seven, and the carriage will not be here until nine-thirty."

"No, I am all ready."

She paused, somewhat abruptly, and I looked up in surprise.

"What is it, Dorothy?"

For a moment she did not reply, but bit her lips as though struggling to repress some inward agitation.

"Well," she said at length, in a low voice, "I had last night the most curious dream, one which is still vividly before my mind, and it seems to me I should feel more at ease if I could tell you about it."

"Please do so, by all means," I observed. And I drew a chair to my side. She seated herself.

“ You know how strongly I had been affected by our experiences of the last few months,” she began; “ and when you consider my anxiety as to Uncle Harry’s condition, and the great shock caused by the news of Ezra’s death, together with the powerful effect of last night’s meeting, you can hardly wonder that all resulted in a nervous condition which was perhaps largely responsible for my dream—or vision, for I might almost call it such.

“ I dreamt,” she continued, “ that I was lifted to a Supernatural Region, far beyond the clouds. There, on a raised platform, were some men, tall and sombre giants ; clothed in regal vesture, they stood grouped around about one greatest man, who was seated. He seemed the oldest and the chiefest ruler there. With crown on head, and sceptre in hand, he gave audience to petitioners and suppliants.

“ And there appeared before him troops and hordes and legions and phalanxes of men, women and children ; and they made obeisance, calling the giants gods, and the old man who was seated they called chief God.

“ And each body of suppliants among the several troops and hordes and legions and phalanxes hated and accused and cursed all the others ; and besought the special favour of the giants, each suppliant for himself and for his own troop, his own horde, his own legion or his own phalanx ; and each sought by vehement words and gesticulations to confound the others and to condemn them in the sight of the supernatural giants. And the giants seemed pleased thereat, and they regarded some and favoured them, but they hated others and drove them headlong from their presence.

“ And all the people, even all the men, women and children, petitioned and supplicated the giants; but

mainly did they so petition and supplicate the chief giant, who was seated. And their principal petitions and supplications were for good fortune and for miraculous interpositions.

“ Nevertheless, the chief giant ruled the people with rigor, and the people feared him.

“ Then, descending, I was brought to another Supernatural Region, and the name of it was the Region of Terror. Here also on a platform was a man, a giant, clothed with regal authority, and his title was ‘ Prince of Darkness, Devil.’ And there crouched before him yet greater troops and hordes and legions and phalanxes of men, women and children, than in the upper Supernatural Region. And the Prince of Darkness ruled them without pity, without charity and without equity. And when I saw all this, a convulsive shuddering and a tremor came over me, which filled my mind with manifold and concrete fears.

“ And I was brought to yet another region of rule, and this was called the Domain of Earthly Rule; and the rulers here were four, and the name of the first was Selfishness, and of the second, Avarice, and of the third, Deceit, and of the fourth, Cruelty. And I saw that these rulers were richly dressed and feasted ravenously, and were the counterparts of the rulers of the two supernatural regions, and they ruled the people with rigour. And, observing closely, I saw that the food of these rulers was prepared from the tears, the sweat, the flesh and the blood of the people.

“ All the while, I heard continually shouts of mad laughter, cries of triumphant glee and grunts of approval from satisfied cunning ; but these were drowned by furious howls of rage and disappointment, by the heartrending sobs of sorrow and of pain.

“ And when certain among the multitude began to make clamour against the rulers, there arose one among them who, clothed in regal vestments, held a sword aloft, threateningly. This quieted the multitude for a time. Again the clamour arose, and then stood up another among the rulers, and he was clothed in sacerdotal vestments, and he, pointing upward and then downward, said : ‘ In the name of the Two Supernatural Regions, I command you to cease your clamours.’ And when the multitude heard this, they were dumb with fear.

“ When I saw all these things I marvelled thereat, and out of pity I cried aloud.

“ And a voice spake, and said : ‘ Thou doest well to cry out of pity, for thy cry showeth thou hast a soul.’

“ And I spake unto the voice, saying : ‘ Tell me, what is a soul ?’ And the voice answered, saying : ‘ It is a spark from the Primal and Universal Source of Love, Mercy, Beauty and Righteousness.’

“ And I said, ‘ I cannot see this Source,’ and I wept because I could not see it.

“ Then said the voice, ‘ Thou canst not see because of a scale which covereth thy right eye, and because of another scale which covereth thy left eye. Remove these scales, and thou shalt see.’

“ And I tried to remove the scales, but I could not. And the voice said : ‘ Search, strive and pray for Light, and the scales shall fall from thine eyes, and thou shalt see.’

“ And when I had done all this that the voice had told me, lo ! I did see ; for the scales had fallen from my eyes. And when I beheld the scales, I found an inscription upon them, even the following : ‘ Superstitions of the Supernatural Regions.’ And then I perceived

that there were no Supernatural Regions above and no Supernatural Regions below. And I perceived and saw all things in the world, how they had tongues, and did speak to me, and I contemplated them and communed with them. And they spoke to me of the Primal and Universal Source of Love, Mercy, Beauty and Righteousness, and then I knew that they spoke of God.

“ And they told me that God has no bodily likeness, nor has He corporeal form, but He is Spirit.

“ Then came I to the earthly rulers, even to Selfishness, to Avarice, to Deceit and to Cruelty, and I said unto them, ‘ By what authority do ye rule ? ’

“ And they, pointing first upward and then downward, said, ‘ Our authority to rule is given us by the two Supernatural Regions.’

“ Then said I, ‘ Ye surely utter lies, for there are no Supernatural Regions.’ And to the people standing around I told all. And when the people heard, they marvelled much thereat, and a cry arose from among them, and they said, each to his neighbour, ‘ Behold! We have been kept in darkness ’ ; and the people began to strive mightily for Light. And many ten thousand objects spoke to them, saying, ‘ We are the handiwork of God; contemplate us and commune with us, and we will teach you God’s laws. And in measure as ye perceive His laws, the Light shall enter your souls and ye shall see. Then shall ye be free from servitude forever.’

“ And when the people had done all these things there came forth a sweet voice, and the voice said :

“ ‘ Let There Be Light.’

“ And there was Light.

“ And the Light took away the old rule from among

the people, and the people appointed unto themselves new rulers instead. And the names of these new rulers were Wisdom, Equity and Love.

"Then were the people joyful, because they were in harmony with God's laws; and God loved them and called them His children."

"My dear Dorothy," I said, as my wife concluded, "your vision not only recapitulates, figuratively, the principal phases of our experiences of the past year, but it indicates, with prophetic foresight, the outcome—the ultimate outcome, of human development."

"Why do you lay so much stress on the word ultimate, Joseph?" she asked. "Must our hope of realisation be tempered by an unqualified ultimate? And if so, will not our hope assume that vagueness which an unqualified ultimate implies?"

"I regret to admit that it will," I replied; "unless, indeed, the new Church Universal is fortunate in enlisting the endeavour of great heroic souls able to materialise the ideals of its founders."

"But you seem to overlook the importance of the proposed book," said Dorothy. "Will not the general circulation of the club meeting reports be enough?"

"By no means," I answered; "for were the mere reading of a book to transform opinions, bores could be soon converted into philosophers by simply reading philosophic books. Another difficulty in the way is this: The mass of the people are readily moved by emotional sympathy, and only the few are influenced by intellectual deliberation. The prevailing religious systems, as you know, appeal mainly to the easily aroused emotional sympathies, whereas our Faith appeals to the intellect. Judge, then, the slender chance of our Faith in competition with the others."

"So materialisation would seem almost hopeless, would it not?" she observed, reflectively.

"No; I should not agree to that statement. On the contrary, it is my opinion that nothing is more certain to be accomplished on this earth than the general acceptance of this very Church Universal, and almost in the form in which it has been put before us."

"Your statements seem contradictory," said Dorothy. "How do you reconcile them?"

"I will try to explain," I replied. "And in order to make myself clear, let me ask you to remove from your mind, for the time being, your present convictions as to the ideas and ideals of the new Church Universal. Then try to suggest a substitute for it, one that in your opinion could perform the same work, one that should serve as the grand final outcome of ultimate human development."

Dorothy reflected for some moments. "I can conceive of no substitute," she said at last; "none higher, truer, or more practical."

"Nor can I," I replied. "And your conclusion and mine are the conclusions of many hundred thousand people in this country and in other parts of the world, and these among the most intellectual."

"Then why not try to organise such people, so as to form a nucleus for the new Church?" Dorothy asked. "It seems to me that this organisation would make rapid headway for the Church among the masses. We were told at the club meetings that the industrial classes must seek in vain for amelioration so long as they are dominated by the monopoly of wealth on the one hand and by the monopoly of learning on the other. The monopoly of learning, therefore, seems, in this instance, to carry with it the balance of power. If, now, a

sufficient number of the learned could be won over to the Church Universal, the balance of power would be transferred to the mass of the people, would it not? Would not all this win over the mass of the people, and with great rapidity?"

"What you say is true," I answered; "but the difficulty lies in the great exertion it would require to organise the first ten thousand, or even the first thousand."

"Is it not as possible in our day as it was in olden times for God to inspire men to do mighty work?" she asked.

"Yes, quite as possible."

"Well, then," she continued, "we are offered a two-fold hope for the future of the Church Universal; one hope that it will be adopted ultimately, though when we cannot tell, and the other that, through the efforts of zealous advocates, it may receive general acceptance in our day."

"You are right," I said.

"With this hope in view, ought we not to employ our endeavours in behalf of the Church while we are on our journey?"

"We ought."

"Ought we not also to arrange for the translation and circulation of the reports in foreign countries?"

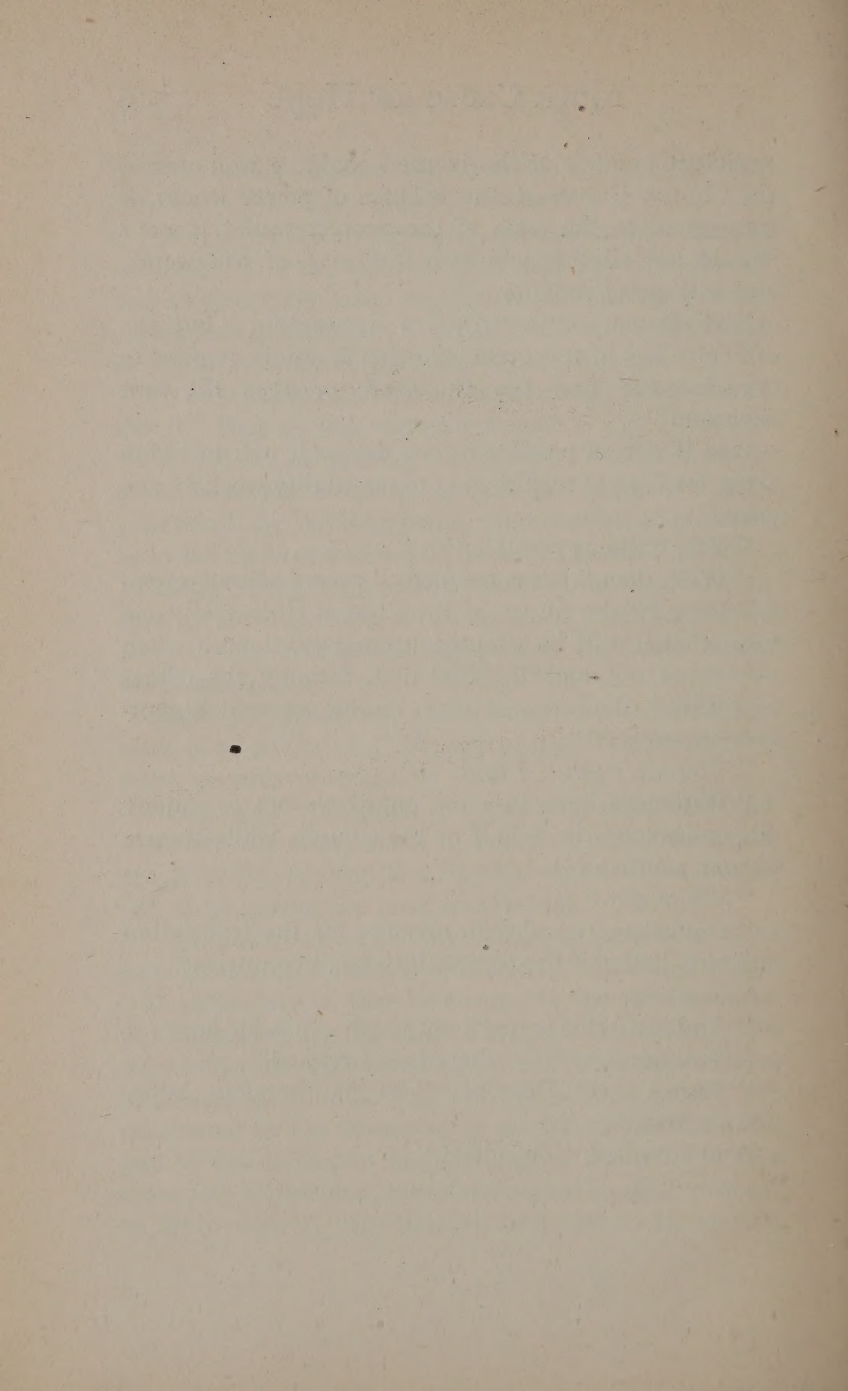
"Yes."

"And in all this is there not much cause for hope?"

"Yes, my dear wife, there is," I replied.

"Then," said Dorothy, "let us therefore hope, and be Steadfast."

And I replied, "Steadfast."





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